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History of the Support Network

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Support Network first began with the notion of creating a guide of available resources in the Penn State/State College communities for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. This idea had been generated through discussion by members of the Pennsylvania State University's Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity.

As discussion for the guide continued and the University continued to deny the requests for a full time staff person and/or a Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender issues, it was determined that a more in-depth program should be created-something that would provide people with the opportunity to talk with other people as opposed to simply referring to a guide. As a result, the Educational Subcommittee for the Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity put forth a proposal to the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee to create the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Support Network.

Rationale for the Network

Unlike more visible under-represented groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons cannot be readily identified. Likewise, there is no easy method of identifying supportive or hostile persons on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Thus people new to the community often experience isolation and loneliness because of the inability to identify an empathetic and supportive community. Even locating simple information can become risky and logistically difficult because of few open networks, directories, and resources.

He Network has been created to respond to the needs of the Penn State community. The goal of the program is to provide a more hospitable environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons by establishing an identifiable network of supportive persons who can provide support, information, and a safe haven to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons within the University community.

The objectives of the Network are:

- To identify and mobilize a network of people empathetic and informed about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues who are willing to provide support, information, and a safe haven.

- To provide evidence of the support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons within the University community by providing a sign as tangible evidence of that support

- To reduce fear of reprisal and discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons within the Penn State community.

Your Role as a Network Member

Visibility is the most important role you have as a member of the Network. As you are aware, it is an expectation that you maintain the Network button, sticker or sign in a location visible to others. Once identified as a Network member, your part will be to provide support, information and referral to individuals who approach you. As a Network member you will be expected respect people's need for privacy and confidentiality.

The manual is intended to provide information and resources that you would need to respond to the most common questions and situations. If you are approach and asked for information which is not included, please contact a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Support Network. In addition to assisting you at the moment, they will be able to make note of what additions need to be made to improve the manual. You will receive periodic updates and additional information as the semester progresses.

The Network is not intended to create a psychological support group. Members are not expected to provide counseling or engage in a therapeutic role with a participant. In some cases, persons seeking assistance may present themselves as emotionally vulnerable. It is the Member's role to inform the participant of the resources available and assist in making the necessary contacts. It is important that Network members always maintain boundaries appropriate to their role as a helper.

In the event that a person provides you with information which leads you to believe that either the person or someone else may be in danger, it is important that you encourage the individual to seek additional support. Refer to the emergency numbers for individual contacts.

What We Do NOT Expect From You as a Network Member

It is important that Network participants know their own limits when responding to a situation. You are a resource person with very general information. If you feel comfortable engaging in additional conversation based on your personal experience and/or background, feel free to do so. This is not, however, an expectation.

There may be times when people seek you out to challenge the purpose of the Network. There may also be people who want to challenge you on general issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender people. You do NOT need to engage in dialogue with persons whose purpose is to challenge. You are there to provide resource information, not to defend issues.

Hotlines

Local Info

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Switchboard of State College

(814)-237-1950, 6:00-9:00 PM 7 days a week
Referrals, peer support, info on local events & resources

Support for GLBT Youth

1 800 96-YOUTH
Out Youth Austin Helpline
7 Days a week, 5:30-8:30 PM CST

1 800 347-TEEN
IYG National Hotline
F&S, 7:00-10:00 PM EST

GLBT General Info

1 888 THE GLNH
GLNH: Gay & Lesbian National Hotline
M-F, 6:00-10:00 PM, S 12:00-5:00 PM EST
www.glnh.org

HIV AIDS Info

1 800 342-AIDS
National AIDS Info Line, 24/7

1 800 234-TEEN
AIDS Hotline for teens
M-F, 3:00-7:00 PM EST

Lion Support

215 HUB, 863-2020
Lion Support @ psu.edu

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

1 800 227-8892
STD Info Line
M-F, 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM EST

1 800 653-4325
STD Info & Referral
Prerecorded Info

Substance Abuse

1 800 ALCOHOL
Alcohol Hotline, 24/7

Homeless/Runaway

1 800 999-9999
The Nine Line, 24/7

1 800 231-6946
National Runaway Switchboard, 24/7

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA)

www.glma.org

AIDS Organizations

ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power)
http://www.actupny.org/

ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power is a diverse, non-partisan group of individuals, united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis. We meet with government officials, we distribute the latest medical information, and we protest and demonstrate. We are not silent.

ACT UP's accomplishments include:

- A radical change in the procedures used by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the release of experimental drugs:
- Developing a condom distribution plan that was approved by the NYC Board of Education in February 1991 and defending that program from subsequent attacks:
- Distributing thousands of clean needles to intravenous drug users, along with information about safe injection techniques and safer sex. This program directly challenged the law that makes needle possession a criminal offense:
- Forcing the Center for Disease Control to expand the definition of AIDS to include opportunistic infections common to women
- Significantly lowering the outrageous price of AZT through a campaign of direct action

There is a great deal to do in the fight to end the AIDS crisis. It is up to you to decide where you fit into that fight and how much time you have to commit. We encourage you to start a new group within ACT UP if there is no committee or working group that addresses your concerns and interests. ACT UP is in a state of constant evolution. Your skills and experiences are valuable in the fight against AIDS.

National AIDS Organizations and Hotline Phone numbers:

AIDS National Interfaith Network (212) 239-0700
American Indian AIDS Institute (415) 626-7639
American Institute for Teen AIDS Prevention (817) 237-0230
CDC National Hotline (800) 342-2437
Mobilization Against AIDS (414) 863-4674
National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) (202) 8980414
National Hemophilia Foundation AIDS Center (800) 424-2634
NIAID Clinical Drug Trials (800) TRIALS-A
National Minority AIDS Council (202) 544-1076
National Task Force on AIDS Prevention (415) 356-8100
National Women's Health Network (202) 347-1140
People with AIDS Health Group (21) 255-0520
Project Inform (800) 822-7422
US Department of Health AIDS Research Program (301) 496-5615

Things You Should Know About Being an Ally

The Four Basic Levels of Becoming an Ally

1. Awareness: Explore how you are different from and similar to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Gain this awareness through talking with gay, lesbian and bisexual people, attending workshops and self examination.

2. Knowledge/Education: Begin to understand policies, laws and practices and how they affect gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Educate yourself on the many communities and cultures of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.

3. Skills: This is an area which is difficult for many people. You must learn to take your awareness and knowledge and communicate it to others. You can acquire these skills by attending workshops, role playing with friends or peers and developing support connections.

4. Action: This is the most important and frightening step. Despite the fears, action is the only way to effect change in the society as a whole.

In Addition to the Four Levels Listed, the Following are Five Other Points to Keep in Mind

1. Have a good understanding of sexual orientation and be comfortable with your own.

2. Be aware of the coming out process and realize that it is not a one time event. The coming out process is unique to gay, lesbian and bisexual people and brings challenges that are not often understood.

3. Understand that gay, lesbian and bisexual people receive the same messages about homosexuality and bisexuality as everyone else. Thus, gay, lesbian and bisexual people suffer from internalized homophobia and heterosexism. It is important to recognize the risks of coming out and to challenge the internal oppression.

4. Remember that gay, lesbian and bisexual people are a diverse group. Each community within the larger gay, lesbian and bisexual community has unique needs and goals.

5. Know at least basic information about AIDS/HIV in order to address myths and misinformation and to be supportive of those affected by the disease whether in themselves or in parents and friends. While AIDS/HIV is a health issue for all, those who live with the most fear and have lost the most members of their community are gay, lesbian and bisexual persons.

Qualities of an Ally

1. Has worked to develop an understanding of homosexuality and the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

2. Chooses to align with gays and lesbians and responds to their needs.

3. Believes that it is in his/her self-interest to be an ally.

4. Is committed to the personal growth required to be understanding and supportive.

5. Is quick to take pride in, and appreciate successes in combating homophobia and heterosexism.

6. Attempts to gain the support of and develop new allies.

7. Is understanding of how patterns of oppression operate, and is willing to identify oppressive acts and behaviors.

8. Expects to make some mistakes but does not use it as an excuse for non-action.

9. Knows both sides of an ally relationship have clear responsibility for their own change, whether or not persons on the other side choose to respond.

10. Know that in the most empowered ally relationship, the person in the mainstream group initiates the changes toward personal, institutional and societal justice and equality.

11. Promote a sense of community with the gay, lesbian, bisexual population, and teaches others about the important of outreach.

12. Tries to have a good sense of humor.

BENEFITS OF BEING AN ALLY

1. You open yourself up to an additional 10% of the world.

2. You have opportunities to interact with, learn from, teach and have an impact on a population with which you may not interact.

3. You become less locked into sex role stereotypes.

4. You may be an important reason that your friend, classmate, roommate, teammate, brother, sister, professor, mother, or father finally decides that life is worthwhile. "Safe zones" help gay, lesbian and bisexual people develop a stronger self-esteem and pride in who they are. On the other hand, low self-esteem can lead to depression, alcoholism, drug abuse and suicide.

5. You will make a difference in the campus environment and in the lives of the members of the gay, lesbian, or bisexual community.

6. You will make the campus a better place for everyone. Oppression is a negative force, and as long as it exists, everyone is impacted.

soc.bi FAQ section A: on bisexuality

Retrieved May 24, 2005, from http://serf.org/~jon/soc.bi/faq/a.html

A1. What is bisexuality?

Bisexuality means sexual or romantic attraction or behavior directed towards some members of more than one sex.

A2. What is "a bisexual"?

A strict definition of a bisexual would be someone who has romantic and/or sexual relations with other people of more than one sex (though not necessarily at the same time - see section A8).

However, since not everyone has necessarily had the opportunity to act on their sexual/romantic attractions, some people prefer a looser definition; for instance, that a bisexual is a person who - in their own estimation - feels *potentially* able to have such attraction. This could be anyone who has erotic, affectionate, or romantic feelings for, fantasies of, and/or experiences with both men and women.

A bisexual may be more attracted to one sex than the other, attracted equally to both, or find people's sex unimportant (see section A7). The strength of their attractions to men and women may vary over time.

A3. Is there a difference between "a bisexual", "bisexual" and "bi"?

Yes. Definitions for "a bisexual" are suggested above - all relating to attraction and behaviour. "Bisexual" (and the short form, "bi") is sometimes used as an adjective, to describe a bisexual person.

However, many people who exhibit bisexual behaviour do not identify as bisexual; and other people may identify as bisexual for reasons other than those suggested in the narrow definitions of section A2. In other words, bisexual identity and bisexual behaviour are not necessarily the same thing. So the word bisexual is being used in two different ways here.

Some argue that if bisexual is to mean anything, it must have a strong definition - that of exhibiting bisexual behaviour, or at least the potential for it. Others feel it is more important to respect people's self-definition whatever it is.

It has been suggested that the word "bisexual" should be limited to describing behaviour, and the word "bi" could be used for describing identity, with all the cultural implications which have grown up in the bi community.

Since the word "bisexual" can be used in different ways, it is enough to bear this in mind and make it clear how *you* are using it, in the interests of good communication.

A4. So if I've never slept with a *MOTSS*/*MOTOS*, but I feel attracted to one, am I bisexual?

> ***MOTSS**: Member(s) Of The Same Sex. Often loosely used to refer to anyone who is* attracted *to members of the same sex.*
>
> ***MOTOS**: Member(s) Of The Opposite (or Other) Sex.*

Can you be? Sure. Are you? That's up to you to decide; nobody can make that decision for you, and nobody has the right to tell you your decision is wrong. Bisexuality isn't about *whom* you sleep with, it's about *how* you feel; so a good rule of thumb in defining your sexual identity is not what you've done, but what you'd like to do.

A5. Aren't bisexuals just going through a phase of being confused about their sexuality?

The simple answer is "no" or at least "not necessarily" - many of us are absolutely certain that we are attracted to both sexes; there is no confusion. Many people are bisexual for life, which proves it is not always just a phase.

It is natural for people who are coming to terms with a sexuality which is not society's norm to be feel confused. For some people, bisexuality is a phase between homosexuality and heterosexuality (and the individual in question could be going in either direction); for others it can just be a brief experimentation. But for many people bisexuality is a lifelong, committed sexual orientation.

And even for those who ultimately do not stay bisexual for life, that does not make it any the less valid as a sexual orientation. Many people have reported that their sexual orientation has shifted over time; sexuality is dynamic, not fixed. For some people it may be a small shift, others a major change of lifestyle; but this does not make the points in between in any sense "wrong". Life is a continuous process, and few of us remain exactly the same over long periods of time.

Some people who behave bisexually (having sex with both MOTSS and MOTOS over time) identify themselves as gay or lesbian or straight. This too does not mean that they are confused, only that they base their sexual identity on their primary interest rather than going for the more technical term bisexual.

A6. Aren't bisexuals really denying their homosexuality?

It's difficult for some lesbian/gay people to come to grips with their homosexuality, and for a while, dating MOTOS may make life seem a little more "normal" and bearable. Let's face it, coming out of the closet and living as a homosexual is no picnic; between the sanctioned discrimination which gay/bi men face of being in a perceived high risk group for AIDS, and the social standards of love, courtship, and marriage, being gay at times takes more energy than humans should be asked to give.

But coming out bisexual is no easy matter, either. Some bisexuals have to face loved ones who have relied in the past on their attraction to them being constant, and who have to assure them that it will be there in the future. We also often have to deal with straight friends who assure us that our attraction to MOTSS is just "a way of avoiding intimacy" or gay friends who suggest that our attraction to MOTOS is "internalized homophobia". At all events, whether or not a bisexual is currently involved with a MOTSS, to much of the straight world anyone who comes out as bi is queer, "one of them," and is discriminated against and excluded on that basis. Thus, being bi is not an "easy way out," a "denial," or a "middle ground." It is for many people the hardest decision they will ever make.

A7. Are bisexuals equally attracted to both sexes?

Many bisexuals feel they have a "preference" for one sex over the other, but they do not deny their attraction for that other sex.

Some bisexuals, however, have no such preference, and instead focus their attractions on qualities they see in an individual regardless of that person's sex. Sometimes these qualities involve sex, sometimes not. For example, some people find men attractive as men, and women attractive as women; others find people's sex irrelevant.

A8. Do bisexuals have to have lovers of both sexes to be bisexual?

No. People who call themselves bisexual are saying that they are attracted to both men and women. They don't necessarily have to act on that attraction, any more than straight or gay people have to act on their attraction to people of the same sex as their partner.

There is a separate newsgroup, alt.polyamory, for discussion of the issues relating to the dynamics of multi-way relationships (whether involving bisexuals or not).

A9. Are bisexuals capable of monogamy?

Yes, some are. It depends on the individual. It's like asking "Can a straight person be monogamous?" Some bisexuals are monogamous, and some aren't. Monogamy is the socially sanctioned option with respect to relationships, but then so is heterosexuality. It should be up to every individual, of any sexuality, to choose the lifestyle which is right for them.

A10. But if they're monogamous, how can they be bisexual?

A bisexual deciding to be monogamous is not deciding to be "gay" or "straight." He/she is still bisexual; he/she has chosen a *person* to live his or her life with, not an orientation, preference or ideology. It is important to recognize that he/she still *feels* bisexual.

A11. Isn't everyone really bisexual?

Not by any useful definition. A useful definition of bisexuality might be, anyone who has serious relationships with members of both sexes, and anyone who identifies as bisexual. It is possible to suggest that everyone has some potential for attraction to both sexes, but since most people never act on it, (*) this is pretty irrelevant.

If someone says that they are straight, or (gay/lesbian) then for you to insist that they are "really" bisexual but perhaps just don't realise it is to deny them their self-identity. Everyone should be free to define their own identity for themselves, which invalidates this kind of generalisation.

Moreover, bisexuality is not *better* than being straight or gay. The best thing for each individual is to be what they feel is right. So please do not think that people identify as bisexual if they are "more highly evolved" or more in touch with their inner feelings. Accept diversity - different people really are different.

(*) Research carried out at the Harvard School of Public Health, USA in 1994 found that 20.8% of the men and 17.8% of the women studied admitted to same-sex sexual attraction/behaviour at some time in their lives.

A12. Why do you think bi issues are different from gay issues, since all your problems come from the same source, homophobia?

While homophobia is a bi issue (many would say the biggest issue), we do also have concerns different from those of the gay community; the most striking being that of dealing with prejudice from the gay community itself!

Among our other issues is the problem of dealing with the emotion of Significant Others who we deeply love yet who cannot understand our attraction to both sexes. And being accepted as bisexual if we only have one partner. And we have to deal with a lot of myths which surround bisexuality.

A13. Why would lesbians/gay men discriminate against bisexuals?

One reason is because we are sometimes perceived as "hiding," a sense that some bisexuals use their bisexuality to look heterosexual at work, in straight social settings, to enjoy the "heterosexual privilege" that is part of the social norm. Secondly, bisexuals are sometimes seen as blurring the issues and weakening the lesbian and gay movement. Naturally, bisexual activists disagree with this view (we feel that the real issue is sexual freedom for all sexualities), but sometimes lesbians and gays label bisexuals "traitors" for this reason. A further reason is that some lesbians and gay men also have sex with MOTOS (while not identifying as bisexual). Often peer pressure means that they can't admit this in the lesbian and gay communities, and see bisexuality as a threat to their own acceptance. And finally, simply because of the fear that arises out of ignorance and out of the media's very poor record of portraying bisexuals as serial killers, homophobes and generally self-centred, confused people.

The lesbian and gay communities are oppressed by homophobia and prejudice, but unfortunately being oppressed is no guarantee that you won't oppress others. Happily, prejudice against bisexuals in the lesbian and gay communities seems to be diminishing over time as more people come to accept that sexuality is not a monochrome issue.

A14. Why *can't* you choose one sex over the other?

Some of us have tried, but why should we? Denying our attraction to one sex or the other *hurts*. If you ask the question out of innocence (you don't feel this attraction, so why should anybody?) then you're asking us to put away feelings that we cannot and will not live without. If you ask these questions with full knowledge of the issues at hand, then your question is as patently offensive as a white supremacist asking us to choose one race over another.

A15. I've discovered that I'm bisexual - should I tell my family?

Look at your life, and decide that if by telling them you will help yourself, and by not telling them you won't hurt yourself (one doesn't necessarily preclude the other). Both instances, of telling or not telling, can be problems. They may not accept you, then again, maybe they will. Not telling them may leave you at peace, or it may gnaw at your mind constantly, with "I really need to tell them" or "I really need to tell *someone* who knows me well".

There are many people in the bisexual community who can tell you of good and bad situations that have happened to us with each different type of decision. Indeed, these "coming-out stories" (so called because they describe "coming out of the closet" and telling people of our sexuality) are often to be heard whenever bisexuals meet - it is something that brings us together, because so many of us have one of these stories to tell.

But, ultimately, the decision is yours, and must be made by you. We can offer support for your courage, and comfort for your loss, happiness for your gain. But *you* must make the step to make it all possible. You must decide whether any need to know, or whether you *want* any to know. Good luck.

A16. Is there really a bisexual community?

You're talking to one right now. We are here to share our lives, through stories, history, friends, family; we are here, on soc.bi, to reach out from one bisexual to another and bridge the gap between isolated bisexual communities. To be the human part of the interface.

We are slowly coming together, demanding that our love of both sexes not be ridiculed or minimized. Demanding that as much as the gay/lesbian community wants recognition and respect from the straight

community, we demand recognition and respect from both. We are falling in love or grieving in loss; we deal with the very human issues of having children; we deal with a world after the advent of AIDS. We enjoy discussing our shared experiences that make us slightly different to the rest of the world. What else is a community?

A17. Are there any bi-friendly places in real life?

Yes. Some lesbian/gay venues (pubs/bars, clubs, meeting-rooms) welcome bisexuals (or in some cases, at least tolerate us). Many major cities in the UK and the USA (and, increasingly, in Australia) have bisexual groups which meet regularly and provide a bi-friendly "space". Details of how to get in contact with the nearest such group to you can be found in:

The Bisexual Resource Guide, edited by Robyn Ochs. It is published by the `Bisexual Resource Center'. Send US$11.95 to BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140, USA.

Additions since the most recent edition of this are included in the Bisexual Resources List (see section A20).

A18. Does anyone know of any good books with bisexual characters?

The Bisexual Resources List (cf. section A20) gives up-to-date details of how to get lists of books (both general literature, and specifically Science Ficton/Fantasy) with bisexual themes and/or characters. Additions to these lists are always welcomed.

A19. What is the Kinsey scale?

Dr. Alfred Kinsey created a scale, graduated between heterosexuality and homosexuality, to rate individuals on actual experiences and psychological reactions. The ratings are as follows:

0 - Entirely heterosexual.
1 - Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual.
2 - Predominantly heterosexual, but with a distinct homosexual history.
3 - Equally heterosexual and homosexual.
4 - Predominantly homosexual, but with a distinct heterosexual history.
5 - Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual.
6 - Entirely homosexual.

Clearly anything above 0 and less than 6 can be defined as bisexual. Although many people will say "I am Kinsey (whatever)," it should be noted that subsequent researchers such as Klein have found it more useful to rate people on a variety of levels, such as "Past History," "Present History," "Present Feelings," and "Future Inclinations". Nevertheless the Kinsey scale remains a useful tool for discussion of sexuality precisely because it is so simple.

A20. What other resources are available on bisexuality?

There is a sad lack of resources for the bisexual community, both in real life and on the web. That said, there is at least an increasing number of web sites focusing on bisexuality. These include the following, which I have tried to arrange in likely order of interest. These are just some which have been mentioned on soc.bi - see below for much more comprehensive hotlists.

Resources for bisexuals

Resource sites specifically about bisexuality.
The Boston (USA) based Bisexual Resource Centre (http://www.biresource.org/)
Holds all kinds of information including

- The *Bisexual Resource Guide*
- Lists of e-mail lists which may be relevant to bisexuals
- Lists of bisexual magazines/publications
- A selection of books on the subject

Bi Women On The Web http://www.bi-women-on-the-web.net/
has lots of resources for bi women.
bi.org http://www.bi.org/
Various bi homepages and resources.
The soc.bi home page http://bi.org/~jon/soc.bi/
Contains resources for the soc.bi newsgroup, including this FAQ, autobiographies of posters, recipes, poems and other articles.
And of course soc.bi http://serf.org/jon/soc.bi/group/index.html
The soc.bi newsgroup itself.

Bi Community resources

Web pages relating to primarily non-internet based projects.

Bi Community News http://bi.org/~bcn/
is the national newsletter for the UK bi community.
BiGirlsToo http://www.geocities.com/bi_girlstoo/
is the website of the Yahoo Group of that name
Anything That Moves http://www.anythingthatmoves.com/
The online version of the San Franciso-originated Bi "zine"
bisexu-l http://drycas.club.cc.cmu.edu/~julie/bisexu-l.html
A general bisexuality e-mailing list - US-centric, high volume.
WomBAT http://songweaver.com/lists/wombat.html
An e-mailing list "for bi womyn".
euro-bi http://www.bi.org/euro-bi/
An e-mailing list for bisexuals in Europe.
bi.org has details of lots more e-mail lists @ http://www.bi.org/db/mail.html
Naomi Tucker was the editor of Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries and Visions
http://www.black-rose.com/bipolbook.html
which lays claim to being the first comprehensive book about bisexual history, theory and politics.
Fritz Klein's American Institute of Bisexuality http://www.bisexual.org/
has resources, personals, chat rooms etc.
The Off Pink Publishing Collective http://bi.org/~OffPink/
publishes books within the bi community.
Married Bi Mom http://www.marriedbimom.com/
is a site for, well, married bi moms.
Bi Women on the Web http://www.slik.org.uk/women.html
is a hotlist of links to bi womens' pages/resources.
Gay/Bi Married Men and Fathers http://communities.msn.com/GayBiMarriedMenandFathers
is an MSN support group for the groups named.

Bi Groups/Regional Resources

Many bi groups have their own pages containing information about their specific group.

lbiwomen http://lbiwomen.bi.org/
is the website of the London Bi Women's Group
Australia's Bi Community Online http://bi.org.au/
has a website to promote and investigate Bi art, culture and community in the Australian context.
Bi.Irish group based in Dublin http://bi-irish.bi.org/
BiNet Houston is the BiNet group in Houston, Texas http://www.flash.net/~bihouse/
BiNet Dallas is the BiNet affiliate group in Dallas, Texas http://www.dfwbi.net
BiNet BC is the bi group of British Colombia http://bi.org/~binetbc
BiNet Arizona http://www.binetaz.org/
BiNet Seattle http://bi.org/~binet-seattle/
Bisexual Network of New Jersey http://www.BiNetNJ.org
BiUnity in Philadelphia http://www.biunity.org/
Biversity Boston http://www.norn.org/pub/other-orgs/brc/biversity
Boston Gay and Bisexual Married Men's Support Group http://www.bmmg.org/
!OutProud! (National Coalition for G/L/B Youth) http://www.outproud.org
Bi-Montreal http://welcome.to/bimontreal

Individuals

These individuals have personal pages with bi-related material (or just links).

Robyn Ochs http://bi.org/~ochs/
is a well-known bisexual speaker and writer.
Jay's Sexuality Page http://www.aq.org/~js/sexuality/
also has bi and poly links.
BiFlag http://www.biflag.com/
Michael Page's campaign to raise bi awareness by promoting a bi flag. Includes free graphics that you can use on your own website.

Related Resources

Broader-aimed sites with some bisexual relevance.

The Queer Resource Directory (*QRD*). http://www.qrd.org/QRD/www/index.html
An ``electronic library with news clippings, political contact information, newsletters, essays, images, and every other kind of information resource of interest to the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Others community".
Bi The Way... http://bitheway.org/
Information and resources for bisexuals, as well as the LesBiGayTrans communities. Includes message boards, chat, personals and pride graphics.
PlanetOut http://www.planetout.com
USA-oriented news, reviews, opinions, and resources. (warning: loaded with graphics, frames, imagemaps etc)
Bisexual and Lesbian resources http://metalab.unc.edu/cheryb/women/resource/lesbian-int.html
Lots of links.
bi all means http://www.biallmeans.org/
A directory of links on bi/poly/women's issues/queer issues.
The Caffmos http://members.aol.com/Caffmos/index.html
An international site focused toward older gay men.

Attitudes Regarding
Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals

Repulsion Homosexuality is a crime against nature. Gays are viewed as sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, and anything that can change them is justified.

Pity Heterosexual chauvinism – heterosexuality is more mature and is certainly to be preferred. Homosexuality is viewed as just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and grow out of. Thus, gays are less mature than straights and should be treated with protectiveness and indulgence on uses with their child.

Tolerance Still implies that there is something to accept, characterized by such statements as: "You're not gay to me, you are a person," "What you do in bed is your own business," or "That's fine as long as you don't flaunt it." This attitude ignores that pain of invisibility and the stress of living "in the closet."

Positive Levels of Attitude

Support The basic approach. Work to safeguard the rights of gays and lesbians. Such people may be uncomfortable with gays and lesbians themselves, but the yare aware of the climate and irrational unfairness.

Admiration Acknowledges that being gay/lesbian in our society takes strength. Such people are willing to truly look at themselves and work on the homophobic attitudes.

Appreciation Values the diversity of people and sees gays as a vital part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat themselves and work on their own homophobic attitudes.

Nurturance Assumes that gays and lesbians are indispensable in our society. They view gays with genuine affection and delight and are willing to be gay advocates.

Something to Think About

Heterosexual questionnaire

The following questions are reversals of questions frequently asked of lesbians and gay men. If you are straight, how do you feel as they are asked of you?

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?

2. When and how did you first decide you were heterosexual? Was there something that happened to you?

3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?

4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?

5. Isn't it possible that all you need is a good gay/lesbian lover? Have you ever had a positive lesbian/gay sexual experience?

6. Heterosexuals have histories of failures in gay/lesbian relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of failing again?

7. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?

8. If heterosexuality is normal, why are a disproportionate number of mental patients heterosexual?

9. Why do you insist on being so obvious and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality?

10. Heterosexuals are noted for assigning themselves and each other into restricted, stereotyped sex roles. Why do you cling to such unhealthy role playing?

11. How can you enjoy a fully satisfying sexual experience or deep emotional rapport with a person of the opposite sex, when the obvious physical, biological, and temperamental differences between you are so vast? How can a man understand what please a woman or vice-versa?

12. How could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual like you, considering the menace of overpopulation?

13. Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous?

14. Could you really trust a heterosexual counselor to be objective and unbiased? Don't you fear he/she might be inclined to influence you in the direction of his/her own leanings?

Some of the Ways that Heterosexism and Homophobia Hurts Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual People

For Those in the Closet

- Having to lie and pretend constantly
- Can't be affectionate with a loved one except when alone
- Having to pretend the person you're with is not your lover whenever someone is around
- Having people try to "fix" you up with members of the opposite sex.
- People giving advice like "you'll never catch a man/woman if you act/dress like that."
- People assuming you and everyone else are heterosexual.
- Being around people who are "flaunting" their heterosexuality while having to hide.
- Having a hard time finding/meeting other lesbian, gay, or bisexual people.
- Thinking you are the only one.
- Thinking that something is wrong with you.
- Never feeling like you fit in, constantly feeling uncomfortable.
- Never really feeling close to someone/safe because of this secret.
- Feeling panic about being found out and feeling like a coward or dishonest.

For those Coming Out

(not just being afraid of these things, which is hard enough, but having them really happen)

- Rejection from friends, roommates, hall mates, family, or teachers.
- Rejection of you friends or lover.
- Rejection of the other things that are important to you – your work, interest, etc.
- People refusing to accept your sexual orientation, seeing it as a phase, trying to get you to change –"See a psychiatrist or you'll grow out of it."

- Having to deal with fear and anger toward you form nearly everyone, including those who have been your best supporters on everything else.

- Losing your job, your living space, and financial support.

- Getting lower grades than you think you deserve and wondering if this is why.

- Subtle rejection or distance form many people and having to wonder if it's real or not; feeling crazy and all alone. Not having any reality checks.

For those who are already out of the closet

(not just having these things happen, which is hard enough, but having them happen regularly)

- Dealing constantly with homophobia and heterosexism.
- Dealing with put-downs, slurs, homophobic jokes and, being talked about or stared at by others.
- Not getting jobs, getting into groups or organizations
- Not getting accepted into grad school
- Being made into a special case-A "good" or "different" gay, lesbian, or bisexual person
- Any affection you show toward a same gender person is seen as a sexual "come on"
- Encountering verbal or physical abuse/violence against you by total strangers just because of who you are.
- Encountering emotional abuse in the form of anti-gay graffiti, jokes and defaced posters.
- Subtle rejection and avoidance by friends and acquaintances who move slightly further apart, cross the street when you walk by, and then deny they are doing this.
- Not having guaranteed civil rights protection to grieve discrimination
- Having outright legalized mistreatment by having children taken away, being denied access to your lover, not getting benefits that are given to opposite sex partners.
- Mistreatment by law courts, police who blame the victim, and the prison system.
- Dealing with people's misinformation and AIDS fears.
- Getting psychiatric/psychological abuse when seeking help.
- Not having any role models or services that meet your needs as a gay man, lesbian, or bisexual man or woman (i.e. the library or bookstore doesn't carry any newspapers, books or journals that cover lesbian, gay, or Bisexual community).
- Being in the position of having to educate heterosexuals about their own homophobia.
- Not having programs or educational activities about heterosexism or homophobia be a routine part of what's happening, but having to organize them yourself if they're to happen at all.

Suggestions for Combating Heterosexism

Assume that wherever you go to work there are lesbians or gay men who are wondering how safe the environment is for them. Don't assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual. Provide safety by making clear your support of gay and lesbian identity.

Realize that the cultural oppression of gays and lesbians is perpetuated in social situation where physical affection with someone of the same sex.

Challenge heterosexism whether or not lesbians or gay men are present. Don't always leave it to gays and lesbians to do it.

Remembering that **silence is complicity**, challenge/confront anti-gay and lesbian statements and structures as well as the assumptions behind them. Do not promote the institutionalize invisibility of lesbians and gays.

Confront your own fear, memories, and bad feelings about gay men and lesbians: Recall and release those feelings, thereby diminishing their hold on you.

Do not assume that a gay or lesbian of the same gender is automatically attracted to you. Do you not assume that all straight people of the opposite gender are interested in you? If a gay or lesbian is attracted to you, trey to be flattered, not offended. If it still bothers you, talk about it.

Change your use of language from "do you have a girl(boy)friend?" "Are you seeing anyone?" Heterosexism is promoted and maintained powerfully thought language. Respect the profound personalness and delicacy of the "coming out" process.

And the Big Challenge

If people jump to the conclusion that you are lesbian or gay because of your friendship with gay or lesbian people or because you are reading a gay or lesbian publication or because you are being affectionate with someone of the same gender, resist your impulses to deny it. Challenge yourself to experience gay/lesbian oppression rather than talking advantage of heterosexual-privilege.

Interacting with Lesbians and Gay Men:

1. Don't assume that everyone is either "homosexual or Heterosexual"

2. Don't assume that a lesbian's/gay man's/bisexual person's sexuality is the most important aspect of that person.

3. Don't assume that being gay/lesbian/bisexual is the cause of a problem in the person's life. "He's depressed all the time <u>because</u> he's gay."

4. Don't assume that being gay in our society is so hard and present so many problems that you should feel sorry for lesbian/gay/bisexual people and/or that they'd all really rather be straight.

1. Assume everyone is a sexual person who may be attracted to and/or sexually or romantically involved with (a) partner(s) of the same or opposite sex. Attraction and/or involvement fall along a continuum for everyone, which can vary over time.

2. Assume that everyone is a multi-faceted individual for whom sexuality is one among the many aspects of their lives.

3. Assume that gay men/lesbians/bisexual people have the same problems as everyone else. They are just as likely to be well-adjusted, and just as likely to have difficulty coping with stresses in their lives. Because of discrimination, they have to deal with particular stressors.

4. Assume that a same-sex erotic and romantic preference is as legitimate as an opposite-sex preference.

5. Assume that the experience of being gay/lesbian/bisexual in a homophobic society has a profound effect on how that person views him/herself and how she/he experiences the world.

Action Ideas for Interrupting Heterosexism

Stopping heterosexist behavior

Notice and ask people not to tell heterosexist jokes

Notice and stop heterosexist language in yourself and others

Establish guidelines and enforce them gently, but firmly

No name calling, ragging, etc.

Educate yourself

Go to more workshops

Read about lesbians/gays/homophobia

Talk about the issue with others

Attend gay/lesbian events

Go to see films with gay/lesbian characters or themes

Join organizations

Read the Myths and Facts section and think about questioning all of them

Make some gay/lesbian friends

Dialogue and explore the issue

Some suggestions for name-calling:

What did you say?
What does that word mean to you?
What did he/she do to make you call them that?
How did you feel when she/he called you that?

Some questions for jokes:

What's funny about that?
Would you explain that joke to me?
If you were gay/lesbian, how would that joke make you feel?
Do you like jokes that put you down as a _____?

That joke relies on a myth about lesbians/gays, and it is……

Support Change in Others

Acknowledge when someone is non-heterosexist

Rename heterosexist acts and comments as unfair or unbecoming

Initiate and Prevent

Plan strategies together as a staff

Develop an agency policy statement against heterosexism

Add sexual-orientation to the non-discrimination policy

Analyze training materials for heterosexist bias

Write to congressmen to support gay rights legislation

Model non-heterosexist behaviors

Be equally physical with girls and boys

Don't joke or tease someone for nontraditional gender behaviors

Avoid heterosexual credentializing-making a point of your heterosexuality

Don't assume that anyone/everyone is heterosexual

Don't assume that heterosexual relationships take precedence over same-sex ones

Use terms like partner and friend, not boyfriend, wife

Value same-sex friendships

Use neutral examples for pronouns

Expand your repertoire of interests to non-traditional ones

Actions to Challenge Heterosexism and Homophobia on Campus

Educate Your Self

- Read gay, lesbian, or bisexual literature and history
- Read newspapers or journals that feature gay, lesbian, or bisexual news/issues
- Go through a whole day imagining yourself to be gay or lesbian
- Attend gay, lesbian, or bisexual speakers, films, workshops, cultural events
- Attend a meeting of a group such as PFLAG (Parents and Friend of Lesbians and Gays)
- Listen to and learn from gay, lesbian, and bisexual people

Model Non-Heterosexist or Homophobic Behavior and Attitudes

- Take pride in your same sex friendships
- Use inclusive language like partner or date rather than boyfriend/girlfriend, wife/husband
- Make friends with and get close to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people
- Show affection for people of both genders or neither gender in public
- Don't make assumptions about others' sexual orientations
- Don't assume that being gay or lesbian is just about being sexual
- Don't assume gays or lesbians don't have, like, or want children
- Keep confidential information you have about other's sexual orientations
- Use the same standards of same gender affection in public that you sue for opposite gender affection

Create an Inclusive Culture and a Welcoming Environment

- Assume that people in your resident hall, classes, groups ,office, campus are gay, lesbian and bisexual
- Assume that closeted gay, lesbian, or bisexual people are in your resident hall, classes, groups, office, campus are wondering how safe the environment is for them; provide safety by making clear you accept and support gay people
- Put up bulletin board displays that include same sex couples or references to gay, lesbian, and bisexual lives
- Post flyers announcing events of interest to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals
- Remember there is a heterosexual assumption so actively advertise gay, lesbian, bisexual people are welcome especially at parties or dances
- Find out about and share resources and information on gay-affirmative service providers, events, bookstores, bars, etc.
- Say the words gay, lesbian, bisexual out loud!

Educate Others

- Sponsor a workshop on homophobia
- Sponsor a gay, lesbian, bisexual speakers bureau program

- Sponsor films like Pink Triangles, Times of Harvey Milk, Before Stonewall, Personal Best, Parting Glances, Desert Hearts, etc.
- Have informal discussions with people in your resident hall, classes, offices, groups, and elsewhere on campus
- Offer alternatives, accurate information, etc. when you hear homophobic stereotypes or myths
- Write articles for campus and local papers on gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues; write letters to the editor raising awareness

Confront Overt Incidents

- Interrupt heterosexist jokes, slurs, comments, or assumptions
- Actively react to anonymous anti-gay graffiti
- Get support for yourself when confronting incidents
- Make clear to all who are involved both relevant policies and your own feelings
- Critically review local media for heterosexual bias and call/write editors with complaints/suggestions

Take a Public Stand

- Wear a button such as "I support gay rights" or How dare you presume I'm Heterosexual?
- Attend a rally or march supporting gay, lesbian, and bisexual people
- Write a letter to the school and local papers
- Sign a petition supporting gay rights
- Promote gay, lesbian, and bisexual non-discrimination policies and domestic partnership benefits
- Campaign to pass a federal gay rights bill
- Form a support/activist group for heterosexual allies
- Organize to get more resources on your campus such as: a Program for GLB concerns, Lesbian and gay students courses/program, pro-lesbian/gay counselors, gay, lesbian, and bisexual speakers, cultural events, gay, lesbian, and bisexual books and films in the library, etc.

Definitions

Ally: Any person who works toward combating homophobia and heterosexism

Bisexual: A person who possesses romantic and sexual feelings towards both genders

Coming out (of the closet): Accepting and/or disclosing to others that you're a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) person

Dyke: The word is derived from the term "dyke-loupers" from old Scotland. They had "louped" or jumped over the "dyke" or low wall that divided the fields and had gone over to the other side. In popular usage, the word "dyke" represents the wall itself – hard, strong, and rigid – and the concept of crossing over, of partaking of both the masculine and feminine worlds, is lost altogether. Recent history has abused lesbians with the use of the term in a hateful manner. Within the community, some have grasped the term as a pride word.

Faggot/Fag: According to Webster's, "a bundle of sticks for firewood bound together." Historically, gay men were gathered, tied together and used for "kindling" when burning someone at the stake who was worthy of a real execution (like a witch or a heretic). Within the community, some have grasped the term "fag" from its painful past and use it as a pride word.

Gay: A homosexual person, usually used for males but can be used to describe females.

Heterosexism: A belief that everyone is and should be heterosexual. This includes prejudiced attitudes or discriminator practices against homosexuals.

Homophobia: Disapproval and fear of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people based on myths and cultural heterosexism.

Homosexual: A clinical term that originated in the late 1800's. Some avoid using the word because it contains the base word "sex." Orientation has more to do with the issue of love than of sex, and it is believed that the use of "homosexual" devalues the orientation of individuals. The terms "gay," "lesbian," "bi," and "trans" are preferred by the majority of the community.

Lesbian: A name taken from the island of Lesbos where Sappho, the great woman-loving poet of 600 BC lived; many women-loving women adopt this name with pride.

Outing: Disclosing someone's sexual orientation to another person, without permission

Straight: A term originating in the LGBT community applied to heterosexuals
and meaning "to enter the mainstream," or "to go straight."

Tolerance: A permissive attitude towards opinions and practices that differ form one's own.

Transgender: A person whose gender identity differs from what is culturally associated with their biological sex at birth.

15 Questions about Lesbians and Gay Men

This list of questions and answers was complied by the women at the Lesbian Resource Center, in the University YWCA in Seattle. They are questions commonly asked at speaking engagements. Accompanying many questions are the myths or stereotypes which most of us have heard or believed at some point, and which serve as the basis for the bibliography at the end.

1. WHAT CAUSES HOMOSEXUALITY?

There are many, many **MYTHS** and stereotypes associated with this question. These can be divided into a couple of categories, as follows:

a) The family-related **MYTHS**: That all lesbians and gay men come from families that are unstable, probably broken, and at best did not offer the proper love and support; That all lesbians and gay men had dominate mothers and submissive fathers; That lesbians were all tomboys as children and gay men were all sissies.

b) **MYTHS** elated to sexuality: That all lesbians and gay men experiences some sort of sexual trauma or rape at a young age; That all lesbians and gay men are scared of sexual relations with the opposite sex; That all lesbians and gay men were seduce by gay adults when they were children.

c) **MYTH**: That lesbians and male homosexuality results from some physical or genetic deformity or abnormality.

ALL OF THESE MYTHS are theories which have been proposed at one time or another to "prove" the cause of homosexuality. No studies have shown conclusive evidence to support any of them. Like their heterosexual counterparts, lesbians and gay men come from all kinds of family backgrounds…from the most stable, loving environment to the most precarious. Their chromosomal/genetic structure is the same as those of heterosexuals, as are hormonal balances. Their behavior patterns and sexual experiences as children can be categorized. Their attitudes toward and fears of the opposite sex are as broad and as narrow as those of heterosexuals toward the same sex.

In short, no theory of causality is sound. It is important to consider, when asking this question, why we don't focus on research into this broad range of sexual preference causation, rather than isolating homosexuality. Recent studies of sexual preference indicate that an individual's sexual orientation is determined before the early grade school years are over; but, again, no factor of causality can be isolated.

2. HOW MANY LESBIANS AND GAY MEN ARE THERE IN OUR SOCIETY?

According to the Kinsey Institute statistics form the early 50's, an average of 10% off the adult population in the United States are predominantly homosexual throughout their adult lives.

Recent studies indicate that Kinsey's statistics are, if anything, on the low side. It should be noted that such statistics are very difficult to calculate since much of the population is neither exclusively homosexual nor exclusively heterosexual (see question #3).

3. ONCE YOU ARE GAY, ARE YOU ALWAYS GAY? CAN YOU CHANGE YOUR SEXUAL PREFERENCES?

First of all, it is important to note that people in our society cover a broad range on a continuum of sexual preference or orientation. According to Kinsey's studies, a very small percentage of people are exclusively homosexual throughout their lives, with a larger percentage being exclusively heterosexual. Between those two, there is a large percentage of people who experience attractions to both sexes all their lives (which they may or may not choose to act on) or who identify as "straight" at some points in their lives and as "gay" at others. This reality makes dealing with the question, "Can you change your sexual preference?" very difficult. However, surveys of psychiatrists show that attempts to "covert" lesbians and gay men to heterosexuality have met with a very high incidence of defeat. As National Institutes of Mental Health studies (1970) show, homosexual behavior is as deeply motivated as heterosexual behavior and has not been "cured" even by the harshest punishments. Many lesbians and gay men, convinced by the dominant culture that their sexual preference is somehow "wrong" have taken their own lives, spent thousands of dollars trying to change, only to find that the way they can truly find health and happiness is to accept themselves as they are and to realize that their way of life may not be that of the majority, but that it is just as healthy and valid.

4. ISN'T HOMOSEXUALITY UNNATURAL?

Many people feel that homosexuality is "unnatural," but studies have shown conclusively that homosexual behavior exists in most species of animals and in all human cultures throughout history. Ford and Beach, two anthropologists, surveyed 76 contemporary societies and found that 64% saw homosexual behavior as normal and socially acceptable. There were also a significant percentage of cultures in which homosexual behavior was experienced by a large portion of the population. It is only in cultures like our won, with strong anti-homosexual taboos, that exclusive heterosexuality is common. The behavior of the minority is no more "unnatural" simply because it is not the majority behavior. We do not consider left-handedness, for instance, an unnatural behavior (though some cultures do, and ours, used to) just because most people are right handed.

4. (COUNTINUED)

An argument often used by those who feel homosexuality is "unnatural" is that heterosexual behavior must be the "natural" form because it is what brings about the continuations of the species. Following this argument to its logical conclusion, no person should engage in any sexual activity which does not result in procreation. Procreation is one function to human sexual activity, but it is not the only function. We eat to keep alive, but that doesn't mean that all eating which is not necessary to keeping the body alive is "unnatural." Another argument often raised around the issue is that if everyone "turned gay," the society would die off. This is almost too ridiculous to speak to, since there are so many in our society who say that they would never

consider homosexual behavior, and since those societies in which homosexual behavior is prevalent have managed to go on reproducing (see question 15).

5. DON'T ALL LESBIANS AND GAY MEN LOOK ALIKE?

Many people tell us that they can pick all the lesbians or all the gay men out of a crowd. This is an interesting contention, since a frequent problem faced by lesbians and gay men is that they do not know how to tell if someone they are attracted to is also gay. Like their heterosexual counterparts, Lesbians and gay men are tall or short; Black, White, Chicano, Asian, or Native American; they have short hair, long hair, or in-between; their behavior fits our society's sex – role stereotypes and it does not; they dress casually, fashionable, and in every range between; they look strong and they look timid. In short, they can not be readily identified (see question #11).

6. ISN'T HOMOSEXUALITY A MENTAL ILLNESS?

Common **MYTHS** related to this question are: That homosexuality is an arrested state of development (that lesbians and gay men never "grew up" or got past "that phase"), and, that all lesbian and gay men are emotionally immature.

The American Psychiatric Association no longer considers homosexuality a mental illness or disorder. It is rather, a natural variant of human sexual functioning. De. Evelyn Hooker, of the National Institute of Mental Health, showed psychiatric tests of homosexuals to a panel of clinicians who could not distinguish them from those of heterosexuals. All existing research upholds this finding. Unfortunately, may mental health professionals, operating from a personal bias that homosexuality is "wrong," or from a lack of information and sensitivity to the needs of lesbians and gay men , still fail to provide adequate care to the men and women seeking their help. Many lesbians and gay men, feeling that their sexual preference is the result of an illness (accepting societal myths) or feeling pressured by the harassment of those who see them as "sick," seek our professional help, but find instead a real lack of understanding, or worse yet, further harassment. Some primary agencies are available in large cities to meet the mental health needs of lesbians and gay men, but many more are needed.

7. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR LESBIANS OR GAY MEN TO DEVELOP LONG-TERM STABLE RELATIONSHIPS?

There is a common **MYTH** that all lesbians and gay men are far more promiscuous than their heterosexual counterparts, and seldom, if ever, form long term love relationships. Few studies have been done in this area, but the frequency of long-lasting, even lifelong relationships between lesbians and between gay men is much higher than is generally believed. Given the fact that short-term relationships are more and more common in our society in general (consider the rising divorce rate) and given the strain that any lesbian or gay man is under in a long term relationship (difficulty in finding living space or good jobs, taboo against showing affection in public, social unacceptance of gay couples attending functions, family gatherings, etc.), it is surprising that there are as many long-term relationships as there are. It should be noted that

lesbians and gay men, just like heterosexual women and men, vary greatly in their desires and motivations toward finding long-term love relationships.

8. DON'T LESBIANS AND GAY MEN MOLEST CHILDREN?

The **MYTH** related to this question is that lesbians and gay men prefer sex with children.

Research indicates that child molesters are most often heterosexual males and are often family members and friends of the family. In assaults on children, 99% of the offenders are male, and 93% of the victims are females. Sexual abuse of children, particularly incest, is a serious problem and more extensive than most of us ever thought possible. But the problem is not caused by lesbians and gay men; rather, most often it is by heterosexual men in a family setting.

9. DO GAY MEN AND LESBIANS "RECRUIT" CHILDREN?

The **MYTH** related to this question is that lesbians and gay men are biologically incapable of reproducing, so they have to "recruit".

The fact that a large percentage of lesbians and gay men are parents indicates that this myth has no basis in fact. There is, furthermore, no evidence to indicate that gay men or lesbians are in any way interested in "recruiting" children or adults to share their sexual orientation. On the contrary, most gay people understand quite well that a particular sexual orientation is not something anyone can be persuaded to adopt; they have learned this lesson well as the heterosexual majority in our society has tired to convince them to change their own sexual orientation. Those who must "recruit" others to their own way of life display an insecurity which does not allow them to accept anyone different from themselves. This insecurity can be found both in some heterosexuals and in some lesbians and gay men, but that does not mean it is characteristic of either sexual orientation.

10. DON'T ALL LESBIANS HATE MEN AND ALL GAY MEN HATE WOMEN?

This is a very commonly-held belief, and a question which we often encounter. Following the logic of this question, it would be necessary to assume that all heterosexual women hate other women and all heterosexual men hate other men. To assume that one hates half of the population because one is not sexually attracted to them is ridiculous- for lesbians and gay men as well as for heterosexuals. (Following this logic even further, one who leads a life of celibacy must hate all people.) Those lesbians and gay men who "hate" the opposite sex are no more the norm than heterosexual men or women who "hate" their own sex.

11. AREN'T LESBIANS TRYING TO BE MEN AND GAY MEN TRYING TO BE WOMEN?

The **MYTH** involved here is that lesbians and gya men dress in the clothes, and bhave like the opposite sex.

No one can tell who is or who isn't a lesbian or a gay man by appearance or behavior alone. There are gay men who are football players, airline pilots, doctors, secretaries, politicians, welders, artist, and farmers…just as there are lesbians who are models, laborers, grandmothers, doctors, scientists, sorority women. For the most part, these women and men are indistinguishable from their colleagues, friends, and neighbors. There are, of course, some lesbians and gay men who adopt mannerisms, styles of dress, and pattern of behavior which they believe are expected of them as gay people. But oftentimes the gentle, nonaggressive male or the independent, career oriented female is not a homosexual, but rather a human being who has stepped beyond the socially-imposed role of restraints assigned to her or his sex.

12. IN GAY RELATIONSHIPS, DOESN'T ONE PERSON PLAY THE HUSBAND AND THE OTHER THE WIFE?

The **MYTH** involved here is that lesbians and gay men are attempting to imitate heterosexual relationships, and the assumption is that heterosexual relationships always include one dominant partner and one submissive partner.

This is an intriguing issue, since sex roles in our society are changing for many people—gay and heterosexual. The assumption that heterosexual couples always consist of dominant husband and a submissive wife is clearly not valid. Research by Maters and Johnson shows definitively that the concept of women as naturally passive and man as naturally active sexually, is untrue, and that few heterosexual couples today confine themselves to these traditional sexual roles. Many heterosexual couples hare trying to define new relationships in which there is a basis of equality in all areas of life, rather than adopting dominant and submissive roles. Likewise, "role-playing" relationships among lesbians and among gay men - - relationship in which one "plays" the dominant role and one the submissive role - - are less and less common as the society at large questions the validity of such sex roles stereotypes. What was common twenty years ago is rare today. It should be noted that for both gay and heterosexual couples who are trying to build relationships as a basis of complete quality of both partners, there are very few role models to look to. This "new" kind of relationship is not a very difficult process and an exciting challenge.

13. ARE THERE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LESBIANS AND GAY MEN?

Of course, it is a well known fact that women and men are raised differently in this society. The activities and lives of women are considered so much less important that those of men that even the word used to describe lesbians and gay men is a word which is really descriptive of men – "homosexual." The laws which govern sexual conduct among adults are primarily concerned with male sexual activities, and the word "homosexual" conjures up, for most people, images of stereotypical gay men with women not thought of at all, or only as an afterthought. Some inconclusive studies have indicated that lesbians tend to seek long-term relationships more than do gay men. However, the Kinsey studies show that 71% of lesbian women and 51% of gay men limit their sexual experience to no more than one or two partners in a lifetime. This figure is almost exactly the same breakdown as for heterosexual men and women. In short, The difference between lesbians and gay men are essentially the same differences as those between heterosexual men and heterosexual women.

14. DON'T ALL LESBIANS AND GAY MEN HANG AROUND BARS MOST OF THE TIME?

The **MYTH** here is that all lesbians and gay men are alcoholics or drug addicts and are basically unhappy; and, that there are no places for lesbians and gay men to meet each other except in bars.

It is generally whispered that all sexual minority people live their lives saturated with alcohol, in dens of opium, and "burn out" by the age of 30. One study, however, by Fifield of Los Angles County, indicates that 25-35% of the urban gay population abuses alcohol and that, of that number, only 10% are at crisis stage. It is important to remember that the gay bar has long served as the community center for gay people and that this situation has occurred because our society made it very difficult for lesbians and gay men to congregate socially any place else. Researchers who have studied lesbians and gay men in the general population have discovered that the majority of these people are as psychologically healthy as their heterosexual counterparts. As more and more social outlets become available to the gay community, fewer members of the community have to turn to alcohol and drugs to cover their loneliness and lack of self-esteem because the loneliness disappears and the self-esteem is raised.

15. ISN'T HOMOSEXUALITY A SIGN OF THE DECLINE OF THE SOCIETY?

The two **MYTHS** associated with this question are: 1) There are a lot more lesbians and gay men in American society now than ever before, and that his coincides with a general moral decline: and 2) That all lesbians and gay men are Communists and social misfits.

It is commonly believed that "rampant homosexuality" has accompanied the fall of such great civilizations as the Roman Empire. However, no reputable historian has seriously considered this theory since the 18th century. Some great civilizations, such as the Persian Empire have declined in spite of strong anti-homosexual taboos. Some cultures where homosexuality has been accepted (like certain American Indian and African tribes) have neither risen to nor fallen from what is traditionally called "greatness". Homosexuality has thrived during the heights of Periclean Greece, Renaissance Italy and Medieval Japan. And with the case of the Roman Empire, the decline of the civilization was accompanied by an increase in anti-homosexual restrictions, not an increase in acceptance.

The argument that homosexuality is socially destructive comes out of the notion that if everyone were exclusively homosexual, the human race would die out. (See Question #4). It should be noted here that many people in our society (including those in religious orders) choose a life of celibacy, but no one proposes that because of them, the species is going to disappear. Our notions of the socially destructive nature of homosexuality date back to such groups as the ancient Hebrews, who could not allow for non-procreative sexual preference because of the important of increasing the tribal population. Today these restrictions are retained even though the reasons for them no longer exist. And our society enforces them with a kind of mania – through socially sanctioned discrimination and hostility. Lesbians and gay men have been used as scapegoats, as have other minority groups. Hitler exterminated 200,000 gay people along

with Jews and other “inferior breeds” and “social misfits”. In this country, during the McCarthy era of the ‘50’s, lesbians and gay men all over the country were labeled “Communists” and imprisoned. We should posit that it is this kind of rampant discrimination and harassment of a minority group, which is socially destructive.

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BISEXUALITY: PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Please consult The Bisexual Resource Guide, referenced below, for a more complete listing.

Anything That Moves: The Bisexual Magazine, national magazine published by the Bay Area Bisexual Network, 2404 California St. #24, San Francisco, CA 94115, (415) 703-7977, e-mail: qswitch@aol.com

Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out, Hutchins, Loraine and Ka'ahumanu, Lani (eds). Alyson Publications, Boston, MA, 1991.

BiNet Midwest Newsletter, regional newsletter, 3534 Girard Ave N. Menneapolis, MN 55412-2418.

BiNet News, national newsletter published by BiNet USA, P.O. Box 7327, Langley Park, MD 20787.

Bisexuality & HIV/AIDS: A Global Perspective, Tielman, Carballo, and Hendricks (eds). Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY, 1991.

Bisexuality and the Challenge to Lesbian Politics: Sex, Loyalty, and Revolution, Rust, Paula C. New York University Press, New York, forthcoming 1995.

Bisexuality: A Reader and Sourcebook, Geller, Thomas (ed). Times Change Press, Ojai, CA, 1990.

Bisexuality In The Ancient World, Cantarella, Eva. Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1992.

Bisexual Lives, The Off Pink Collective. Off Pink Publishing, London, 1988.

The Bisexual Option (2nd edition), Klein, Fritz, MD. Haworth Press, Binghamton, NY, 1993.

Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries, and Visions, Tucker, Naomi (ed). Haworth Press, Binghamton, NY.

Bisexual Resource Guide, (international reference) Ochs, Robyn (ed). Bisexual Resource Center, P.O. Box Cambridge, MA 02140, (617) 338-9595 (updated annually).

Bi-Women, newletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, P.O. Box 639 Cambridge, MA 02140.

Closer To Home: Bisexuality and Feminism, Weise, Elizabeth Reba (ed). The Seal Press, Seattle,WA, 1992

Dual Attraction: Understanding Bisexuality, Weinberg, Williams, Pryor, Oxfor University Press, NY, 1994

Good Sense & The Faithless, (poetry) Clinton, Michelle. West End Press, Albuquerque, NM, 1994.

Homophobia: How We All Pay The Price, Blumenfeld, Warren J. Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 1992.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Identities Over the Lifespan, D'Augelli, A.R. and Paterson, C.J. (eds). Oxford University Press, 1995. Chapter of special interest: "Bisexual Identities" by Ron C. Fox, Ph.D.

North Bi Northwest, bi-monthly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, P.O. Box 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98103-0645

Telling The Beads, (poetry) Montgomery, M.S. Chestnut Hill Press, Baltimore, MD, 1994.

The Very Inside: An Anthology of Writing by Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Women, Lim-Hing, Sharon (ed). Sister Vision Press, Toronto, 1994.

Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life, Garber, Marge. Simon and Shuster, New York, 1995.

Women & Bisexuality, George, Sue. Scarlet Press, London (distributed in the US by Inland Press), 1993.

Sexual Identity and Gender Identity Glossary

Retrieved May 17, 2005 from http://www.sexuality.org/l/lesbigay/glossary.html

This pamphlet is designed to give heterosexuals and people who are just starting to think of coming out some basic common terms with the gender and sexual identity communities, so that they can speak somewhat intelligently with members of these communities without seriously offending people or appearing totally clueless. Keep in mind that:

The definitions of these words are not standardized throughout society, and are used differently by different individuals and in different regions. In particular, these definitions assume the existence of two and only two each of sexes, genders, and sex/gender roles, which are separate and distinct from one another; but many people see them as overlapping, closely related, or as a limited view or model of a much richer reality.

The meanings of words change over time. Changes in thinking and attitudes toward sexual and gender identity are taking place in society as a whole and within the sexual and gender identity communities. The meanings of these words will continue to change. For instance, some words are listed For example, there is a slow but clear movement in society away from thinking of most human behaviors as appropriate to one sex and not appropriate to another, toward thinking of most human behaviors as appropriate to both sexes and both genders.

Definitions in (this early version of) this pamphlet were gathered by a bisexual-identified white male from the Midwest and Northeast of the US. In other parts of the world and other communities than those he is familiar with, the same terms may mean different things, and other terms may be used for the same and other important meanings.

Despite these caveats, many people find the terms listed here useful in varying degrees for describing their experience, if only as a starting point for describing how their view of the world differs from that represented here.

Corrections and additions to these words and definitions (from the US and elsewhere) are welcome. Please send them to the ECBN address at the end of this pamphlet.
Sexual Identity and Gender Identity are similar in some ways and very different in others. Both refer to how one thinks of a person. The existence and perpetuation of gender and sexual identities is based in the historic and continuing oppression (systematic mistreatment condoned by society as a whole) of people do not conform to certain aspects of society's gender roles. Gender roles refer to the clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. that are considered appropriate or inappropriate for members of each sex.

However, sex, gender identity, and sexual identity refer to different aspects of oneself. Therefore, one may be any combination of sex (male/female), gender (masculine/feminine), and sexual identity (straight, bisexual, lesbian/gay.) In recent history, people oppressed on the basis of different sexual identities (bisexuals, lesbians, gay men) and people oppressed on the basis of gender identity have formed communities which are partly separate and partly overlapping with one another. Because of this historic separation, someone who is a member of one of these communities does not necessarily understand and prioritize the issues of others of these

communities. One who belongs to more than one of these communities may feel welcome in both, but usually neither addresses all one's needs or the way that one's needs from different communities overlap or interact.

Gender identity refers to how one thinks of one's own gender: whether one thinks of oneself as a man (masculine) or as a woman (feminine.) Society prescribes arbitrary rules or gender roles (how one is supposed to and not supposed to dress, act, think, feel, relate to others, think of oneself, etc.) based on one's sex (whether one has a vagina or a penis.) These gender roles are called feminine and masculine. Anyone who does not abide by these arbitrary rules may be targeted for mistreatment ranging from not being included in people's circle of friends, through the cold shoulder, snide comments, verbal harrassment, assault, rape, and murder based on one's (perceived) gender identity.

Sexual identity refers to how one thinks of oneself in terms of whom one is sexually and romantically attracted to, specifically whether one is attracted to members of the same gender as one's own or the other gender than one's own. Society prescribes arbitrary rules that one should be sexually and romantically attracted to members of the other gender than one's own, and should not be attracted to members of the same gender as one's own. Anyone who does not abide by these arbitrary rules may be targeted for mistreatment ranging from not being included in people's circle of friends, through the cold shoulder, snide comments, verbal harrassment, assault, rape, and murder based on one's (perceived) sexual identity. (See homophobia and biphobia.) When one's sex and one's gender identity are different, one may base one's sexual identity on either one. Alternatively, one may have two sexual identities, one as a man and one as a woman.

These are terms often used within the sexual identity and gender identity communities. Self-identification terms are often spelled with initial caps (e.g. Queer, Bisexual) to emphasize that they refer to how one think of oneself, rather than how someone else labels one. (For instance, researchers often classify bisexual-identified women and men as lesbians and gay men and transvestites as transsexuals, obscuring important distinctions.)

Androgenous/Androgeny

One who is / the quality of simultaneously exhibiting masculine and feminine characteristics.

Bigendered

One who switches between masculine and feminine gender roles from time to time.

Biphobia

The oppression or mistreatment of Bisexuals, especially by lesbians and gay men. (See homophobia.)

Bisexual

One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions to members of both the same and the other sex, or who identify as members of the bisexual community. Derogatory terms

include the same terms as are applied to lesbians and gay men. Derogatory terms from lesbians, gay men, and some heterosexuals: fence sitter, AC/DC, double-gaited, confused.

Boy

1) A young male. 2) Colloquial term for masculine. Often used to specify gender of clothes. ["My boy clothes."] Boy has often been used as a condescending term for a man (especially a man of color), and is therefore distasteful to many people. (See girl.)

Butch

1) Masculine or macho dress and behavior, regardless of sex or gender identity. 2) A sub-identity of lesbian or gay, based on masculine or macho dress and behavior. (See femme.)

Camp

To joke or playact exaggerated masculine or feminine behaviors for others' entertainment. Especially men exhibiting exaggerated feminine behaviors. Also to camp it up.

Come out

1) To disclose one's own sexual identity to another. [I came out to my mother over Thanksgiving vacation.] 2) To discover that one's own sexual identity is different than previously assumed. [I came out to myself three months ago.] 3) To deal with one's own and others' reactions to the discovery or revelation of one's sexual identity. 4) (- for) To disclose another's sexual identity with their permission or at their request. [I asked my mother to come out to my grandparents for me.] (See out.) 4) Sometimes applied to disclosure of other information than one's sexual identity.

Cross Dresser (CD)

One (regardless of the motivation) who wears clothes, makeup, etc. which are considered (by the culture) appropriate for the other sex but not one's own.

Drag (In Drag)

1) Clothes, often unusual or dramatic, especially those considered appropriate to the other sex. 2) Can be applied to any recognizable "look." [_(to a man in a suite)_: I see you are in corporate drag today.] 3) _In drag_: Wearing clothes of the opposite sex. [I went to the halloween party in drag.]

Drag Queen

A M->F transvestite who employs dramatic clothes, makeup,and mannerisms, often for other people's appreciation.

Dyke

Reclaimed derogatory slang. Refers to Lesbians, or to Lesbians and Bisexual women.

Electrolysis

Process of killing hair follicles, especially of facial and neck hair, usually with an electric needle.

F->M

Female to male. Used to specify the direction of a sex or gender role change.

Femme

1) Feminine or effeminate dress and behavior, regardless of sex or gender identity. 2) A sub-identity of lesbian or gay, based on masculine or macho dress and behavior. (See butch.)

Female

One who has a vagina.

Female Impersonator (FI)

A male who, on specific occasions, cross dresses and employs stereotypical feminine dialog, voice, and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people.

Feminine

The gender role assigned to females.

Fetishistic Transvestite

A Transvestite who consistently eroticizes Cross Dressing. May also eroticize fantasies of gender/sex change.

Gay (man/male) (community)

One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions primarily to members of the same sex (as oneself), or who identifies as a member of the gay community. Sometimes refers only to gay males, sometimes only to gay males and lesbians. Although some people use the term gay (community) to refer to all sexual minorities (or the sexual minority community), Lesbians and Bisexuals often do not feel included by it. Derogatory slang includes: queer, faggot, swish.

Gender (identity)

A psychological gender role. Masculine or feminine.

Gender (identity) community

People who identify as transvestite, transsexual, or transgendered, or as members of the gender community. Members of the gender community do not necessarily identify as members of the sexual minority community. (See transgender community.)

Gender dysphoria (GD)

Unhappiness or discomfort experienced by one whose sexual organs do not match one's gender identity.

Gender neutral

Clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. which are considered appropriate for members of both sexes.

Gender role

Arbitrary rules, assigned by society, that define what clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. are considered appropriate and inappropriate for members of each sex. Some clothing, behaviors, etc. are considered appropriate for members of both sexes. Which things are considered masculine, feminine, or neutral varies according to location, class, occasion, and numerous other factors. (See masculine, feminine, and gender neutral.)

Genetic Boy (GB)

Colloquial term for Genetic Male. (See boy.)

Genetic Male/Man (GM)

One who was considered male from birth, regardless of one's present sex or gender identity.

Genetic Female/Woman (GF/GM)

One who was born female, regardless of one's present sex or gender identity.

Genetic Girl (GG)

Colloquial term for Genetic Female. (See girl.)

Girl

1) A young female. 2) Colloquial term for feminine. Often used to specify gender of clothes. ["My girl clothes."] Girl has often been used as a condescending term for a woman, and is therefore distasteful to many people. (See boy.)

Hermaphrodite

One who has both a penis and a vagina.

Heterosexual (het)

One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions primarily to members of the other sex (than oneself.) Derogatory terms include: breeder. (See straight.)

Heterosexism

The assumption that identifying as heterosexual and having sexual and romantic attractions only to members of the other sex (than oneself) is good and acceptable, and that other sexual identities and attractions are bad and unacceptable. The assumption that anyone is straight whose sexual orientation is not known, usually coupled with a "blindness" to the existence and concerns of LesBiGays.

Homophile (community)

Obsolete term for gay male (community.)

Homophobia

Originally, an irrational fear of sexual attraction to the same sex. Developed into a term for the oppression of Lesbians and Gay men, and later into a term for all aspects of the oppression of Lesbians, Gay men, and Bisexuals (sometimes does not include bisexuals.) This oppression ranges from not including LesBiGays in one's circle of friends and media reports on and representations of society, through the cold shoulder, snide comments, verbal harrassment, assault, rape, and murder based on the target person's (perceived) sexual identity. (See also Biphobia.)

Homophobe

One who is afraid of or oppresses people because one (perceives them to) have sexual and romantic attractions to members of the same sex.

Homosexual

Formal or clinical term for gay, usually meaning gay male, sometimes meaning LesGay, and occasionally meaning LesBiGay. Homosexual and homosexuality are often associated with the proposition that same gender attractions are a mental disorder (homophilia), and are therefore distasteful to some people.

Hormone therapy

Used to change secondary sex characteristics, including breast size, weight distribution, and facial hair growth. (See electrolysis.)

Identify/ied (as)

To think of oneself as having a particular sexual identity or gender identity. [I identify as a bisexual. I am bi-identified.] To emphasize that an identity term refers to one's internal reality, as opposed to what others think or observe of one, self-identify is sometimes used.

Identity

How one thinks of oneself. One's internal self, as opposed to what others observe or think about one. (See Label.)

Label

How someone else sees or thinks of one. (See identity.)

Lesbian

A woman who has significant sexual and romantic attractions to members of the same sex, or who identifies as a member of the lesbian community. Bisexual women often do not feel included by this term. Derogatory slang: dyke, lesbo.

LesBiGay (community)

Contraction of "lesbian, bisexual, and gay." Colloquial term for the sexual minority community or its members. Often spelled with capital "B" and "G" to prevent misinterpretation as "lesbian and gay." (See sexual minority/identity community.)

LesGay

Contraction of "lesbian and gay." Sometimes used to mean LesBiGay, but bisexual women and men often do not feel included by this term.

M->F

Male to female. Used to specify the direction of a sex or gender role change.

Male

One who has a penis.

Male Impersonator

A female who, on specific occasions, cross dresses and employs stereotypical masculine dialog, voice, and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people.

Masculine

The gender role assigned to males.

Monogendered

One who is comfortable in only one gender role. (Do people actually use this, or is it just a syntactic extension of bigendered?)

Monosexual

One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions primarily to members of one sex. Straight, Gay, Lesbian. Someone who is not Bisexual.

Neuter

1) One who has neither a penis nor a vagina. 2) Occasionally used to mean androgynous.

Other sex/gender

The other sex or gender than the reference person's own. [She has an other sex partner (than her own sex).] [Are you currently in a relationship with a member of the same sex (as yourself)?]

(to be) Out

To be open about one's sexual identity with someone or in a situation. [I am out to my mother.] [I am out at work.] (See come out.)

Out (someone)

1) To disclose a second person's sexual identity to a third person, especially without the second person's permission. 2) To disclose one's own sexual identity, sometimes without choosing to do so. [I outed myself by leaving a political letter on my desk, which my boss saw when he was looking for me.] (See come out.)

Pre-operative transsexual (Pre-op TS)

One who is actively planning to switch physical sexes, mostly to relieve gender dysphoria. Probably, but not necessarily, cross dresses, takes hormone therapy, and gets electrolysis. (See transsexual.)

Primary sex organs

Penis (male) or vagina (female.) (See female, male, hermaphrodite, neuter.)

Queer

1) Reclaimed derogatory slang for the sexual minority community (eg. Queer Nation.) Not accepted by all the sexual minority community, especially older members. 2.) Sometimes used for an even wider spectrum of marginalized or radicalized groups and individuals.

Same sex/gender

The same sex or gender as the reference person's own. [He has a same sex partner (as his own sex).] [Are you currently in a relationship with a member of the same sex (as yourself)?]

Self-identify/identity as

See identify as and identity.

Sex

Male or female, depending on one's primary sex organs.

Sex role

See gender role.

Sexual identity

How one thinks of oneself, in terms of being significantly attracted to members of the same or the other sex. Based on one's internal experience, as opposed to which gender one's actual sexual partners belong to. (See sexual orientation/preference.)

Sexual identity/minority community

The community of people who have significant sexual and romantic attractions to members of the same sex, or who identify as a member of the sexual minority community. A formal term which includes LesBiGays and sometimes members of the gender community. Members of the sexual minority community usually do not identify as members of the gender community.

Sexual orientation/preference

How one thinks of her/himself, in terms of being significantly attracted to members the same or the other sex. Sexual orientation emphasizes that some people feel that one has no control or influence over the development of one's sexual and romantic attractions or one's sexual orientation. Sexual preference emphasizes that some people feel that one

does or should have some control or influence over the development of one's sexual and romantic attractions or sexual one's orientation.

Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS)

A surgical procedure which changes one's primary sexual organs from one sex to another (penis to vagina or vagina to penis.)

SRS

Colloquial for Sexual Reassignment Surgery.

Straight

Colloquial for heterosexual. Because straight has connotations of "unadulterated," "pure," and "honest," some members of the sexual identity community object to the implication that one who is not straight is "bent," "adulterated," "impure," or "dishonest." Straight has connotations of "narrow," "straight-laced" or "conservative," and some heterosexual-identified people object find it distasteful.

Transgender community

Formal term for gender community.

Transgendered (TG)

One who switches gender roles, whether just once, or many times at will. Inclusive term for transsexuals and transvestites.

Transsexual (TS)

One who switches physical sexes (usually just once, but there are exceptions.) Primary sex change is accomplished by surgery. (See SRS.) Hormone therapy, electrolysis, additional surgery, and other treatments can change secondary sex characteristics. (See Pre-op TS.)

Transvestite (TV)

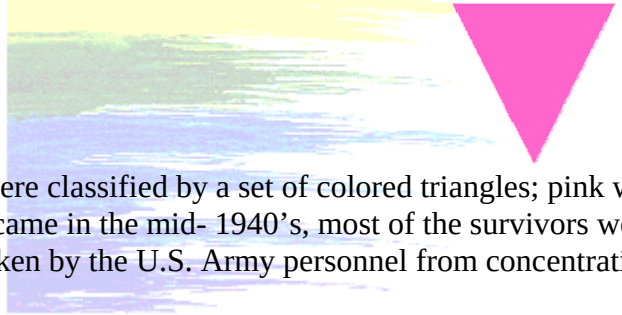
One who mainly cross dresses for pleasure in the appearance and sensation. The pleasure may not be directly erotic. It may be empowering, rebellious, or something else. May feel comfortable in a focused transgender role while cross dressed. May occasionally experience gender dysphoria.

Symbols of Pride

Double Woman's Symbol – Also known as "the mirror of Venus". This symbol represents metal, copper, femininity, and the planet Venus. The double woman's symbol represents women loving women.

Double Man's Symbol – Derived from the astrological symbol of Mars. Mars was the Greek God of War and patron of warriors. The arrow is a phallic symbol. The double man's symbol represents men loving men.

The Pink Triangle - When the allied forces liberated the Nazi concentration camps, the horrors that they discovered shocked a disbelieving world. That millions had been systematically tortured and murdered seemed beyond human capacity for violence and hate. The Holocaust forever changed our understanding of the potential of evil.



Concentration camp prisoners were classified by a set of colored triangles; pink was reserved for homosexuals. When liberation came in the mid- 1940's, most of the survivors were set free. Homosexuals, however, were taken by the U.S. Army personnel from concentration camps to allied prisons.

Since the 1940's, the pink triangle has become one of the most recognizable and powerful symbols for gay people and the oppression they have faced throughout Western History. The pink triangle was a commonly used insignia throughout the early gay liberation movements. It appears in photographs and film footage of the early marches and demonstrations. The pink triangle was ubiquitous at the Nation March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987. It is a reminder and the statement, "Never Again!"

The Rainbow Flag – The Rainbow flag has been adopted by the gay and lesbian community as the community's oven design. It depicts not the shape of the rainbow, but its colors in horizontal stripes.

Created in 1978 for San Francisco's Gay Freedom Celebration by local artist, Gilbert Baker, the flag was inspired by the "Flag of the Races" which had five stripes - one for each of the colors of human skin, and was flown at the 1960 college campus demonstration.

Major gay and lesbian parades in New York, Houston, Vancouver and Toronto began to fly the six-stripe Rainbow Flag. It is prominently displayed at all homosexual events. In New York, the Rainbow Flag drapes coffins of people who have died of AIDS, and is frequently displayed on hospital doors. The AIDS ward of a Sydney Australia hospital flied the Rainbow Flag as a symbol of hope. In a few short years, the flag has spread world-wide to represent a movement. Its success is not due to any official recognition but to the widespread spontaneous adoption by members of the community it represents.

Books and videos that you might find helpful…

BOOKS

Baker, J. M. *How Homophobia Hurts Children.* New York, NY: Haworth Press.

Bernstein, Robert A. (1995). *Straight Parents, Gay Children.* Thunder's Mouth Press: New York, NY. Written by a former National Vice-president of PFLAG, this is a book to help parents understand their feelings about their GLBT children.

Borhek, M.V. (1993). *Coming Out to Parents: A Two-way Survival Guide for Lesbians and Gay men and their Parents.* Pilgrim Press: Cleveland, OH. This book explores the fears and misgivings experienced by GLBT people coming out to their parents, and also an examination of parents' reactions to their children's coming out.

Pardie, L, & Luchetta, T (Eds). (1999). *The Construction of Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men.* Harrington Park Press: New York, NY. Edited by two psychologists, this is a book about homophobia and heterosexism and how it can be changed.

Castiglione, J. (1992). *The Straight Person's Guide to Gay People's Anguish.* Northwest Publishing: Salt Lake City, UT. Written by a member of Dignity, this book describes the journey of a Catholic gay man and his family.

Bozett, F.W., & Sussman, M.B.(Eds). (1990). *Homosexuality and Family Relations.* Harrington Park Press: New York, NY. Edited by two experts on family relations, this book covers a wide range of issues from a GLBT perspective: religion, adoption and parenting, married gays and lesbians, aging.

Isensee, R. (1992). *Growing up Gay in a Dysfunctional Family.* Simon & Schuster: New York, NY. Written by a psychotherapist, this book describes the effects of family rejection on GLBT people and how they can recover from it.

Wakeling, L., & Bradstock, M. (Eds). (1995). *Beyond Blood: Writings on the Lesbian and Gay Family.* Blackwattle Press: Sydney, Australia. A collection of individual stories from GLBT parents and their children about alternative families.

Shernoff, M. (Ed.) (1997). *Gay Widowers: Life After the Death of a Parnter.* Harrington Park Press: New York, NY. Edited by a psychotherapist, this book tells the stories of gay men who have lost their life partner.

Cantwell, M.A. (1996). *Homosexuality: The Secret a Child Dare Not Tell.* Rafael Press: San Rafael, CA. A mother's investigation of GLBT children's experiences.

Bass, E. & Kaufman, K. (1996). *Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth and their Allies.* HarperPerrenial: New York, NY. This book is a practical guide for GLBT youth containing the stories and experiences of more than fifty GLBT youth.

Owens, R.E., Jr. (1998). *Queer Kids: The Challenges and Promise for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth.* Harrington Park Press: New York, NY. This book is written for three target groups: youth, parents, and counselors.

Heron, A. (Ed.) (1983). *One Teenager in 1: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth.* Alyson Publications: Boston, MA. A collection of writing by GLBT youth about their experiences.

Ryan, C. & Futterman, D. (1998). *Lesbian and Gay Youth; Care and Counseling.* Columbia University Press: New York, NY. This book is written for parents, counselors, teachers, and anyone else who works with GLBT youth.

Friskopp, A. & Silverstein, S. (1995). *Straight Jobs, Gay Lives.* Touchstone Books: New York, NY. A comprehensive guide to GLBT workplace issues.

Ellis, A.L., & Riggle, E.D.B., (Eds) (1996). *Sexual Identity on the Job: Issues and Services.* Harrington Park press: New York, NY. This book describes the effects of workplace discrimination and harassment on GLBT people.

Woog, D. (1998). *Jocks: True Stories of America's Gay Male Athletes.* Alyson Books: Boston, MA. This book deals with the issues of gay athletes and dispels the myths that homosexuality and athletics are incompatible.

Harbeck, K.M. (Ed.) (1992). *Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Gay and Lesbian Students, Teachers, and the Curricula.* Harrington Park Press: New York, NY. This book describes the cost of GLBT invisibility in the education system.

Coles, M.A. (1996). *Try This at Home: A Do-It-Yourself ACLU Guide to Winning Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights.* New Press: New York, NY. A practical and no-nonsense guide for individuals and grassroots groups on securing equal rights for GLBT people.

Berzon, B. (1990). *Permanent Partners: Building Gay and Lesbian Relationships that Last.* Plume: New York, NY. Written by a counselor who specializes in same-sex couples, this book offers clear and compassionate advice for same-sex couples.

Clunis, D.M., & Green, G.D. (1988). *Lesbian Couples.* Seal Press: Seattle, WA. A book written by two lesbians specifically for lesbians.

McWhirter, D.P., & Mattison, A.M.. (1984). *The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop.* Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ. One of the first descriptions of gay same-sex couples.

Marcus, E. (1988). *The Male Couple's Guide to Living Together.* Harper & Row: New York, NY. A book for parents, gay men, and others to dispel doubts about the wholesomeness of same-sex couples.

Duberman, M, Vicinus, M, and Chauncey, G. Jr. (Eds) (1989). *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past.* Meridian: New York, NY. A collection of scholarly works on gender identity and sexual orientation throughout history.

Rowse, A.L. (1977). *Homosexuals in History.* Carroll & Graf: New York, NY. A scholarly "outing" of famous historical homosexuals.

VIDEOS

Homoteens. Joan Jubela. 1994. Frameline, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 703-8650. Portraits of five diverse New York City teens. Well done and engaging, with much of the filming done by the youth. 58 minutes.

Out: Stories of Lesbian and Gay Youth. David Adkin. 1993. National Film Board of Canada, 1251 Ave. of the Americas, 16th fl, New York, NY 10020, (212) 596-1770. A sensitive look at the lives of a rich cross-section of young gays and lesbians and some of their families. Filmed mostly in the Toronto area. 79 minutes.

Straight from the Heart: Stories of Parents' Journeys to a New Understanding of Their Gay and Lesbian Children. Dee Mosbacher. 1994. Motivational Media, 8439 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069, (800) 848-2707. Nominated for a documentary Academy Award, this touching video examines the issues parents face in coming to terms with having a gay or lesbian child. Especially useful in regard to religious concerns. 24 minutes.

Queer Son: Family Journeys to Understanding and Love. Vickie Seitchik. 1994. Vickie Seitchik, 19 Jackson St., Cape May, NJ 08204, (212) 929-4199. An excellent personal documentary with interviews of families from diverse racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds. Compelling. 48 minutes.

Both of my Moms' Names are Judy. Lesbian and Gay Parents Association (LGPA). 1994. GLPCI, P.O. Box 43206, Montclair, NJ 07043, (202) 583-8029. The video presents a racially diverse group of children (ages seven to ten) talking about the love they feel for their gay and lesbian families. Powerful. Excellent tool for sensitizing elementary school educators and parents. Comes with training materials. 10 minutes.

Gay Youth: An Educational Video for the Nineties. Pam Walton. 1992. Wolfe Video, Box 64 New Almaden, CA 95042, (408) 268-6782. Excellent award-winning documentary highlighting two powerful stories, one with a positive outcome, one with a tragic suicide. Comes with a study guide. Appropriate for adult audiences. 40 minutes.

Just for Fun. Gordon Seaman. 1994. Direct Cinema Limited, P.O. Box 10003, Santa Monica, CA 90410-1003, 1-800-525-0000. Well-acted, well-written drama that examines the issues surrounding homophobia and gay-bashing. Excellent for high school or college use. Will stimulate meaningful classroom discussion. 24 minutes.

Sticks, Stones, Stereotypes. Cindy Marshall. Equity Institute. 1988. ETR Associates, P.O. Box 1830, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830, 1-800-321-4407. Excellent video and curriculum module about name-calling, appropriate for high school or first-year college. Homophobia is the focus. Extensive guide available in English and Spanish. 26 minutes.

Too close…For Comfort. Wild Ginger Productions. 1990. ETR Associates, P.O. Box 1830, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830, 1-800-321-4407. Well-done video with excellent study and discussion guide. Deals with fear of AIDS, homophobia, and discrimination. Appropriate for high school and first-year college classrooms. 27 minutes.

Who's Afraid of Project 10. University of Southern California. 1989. Friends of Project 10, 7850 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046, (818) 577-4553. Well-edited interviews with supporters and opponents of Project 10. Especially good for audiences of educators. Virginia Uribe is featured. 23 minutes.

Always my Kid: A Family Guide to Understanding Homosexuality. Steve Baker and Russell Byrd. 1994. TriAngle Video Productions, 550 Wescott, #400, Houston Texas 77007. A collection of interviews that provide answers to the negative myths and stereotypes. Interviews of religious leaders are especially useful.

From a Secret Place. Karin Heller and Bill Domonkos. 1994. Fanlight Productions, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130, (617) 524-0980. Six gay and lesbian young people and three supportive parents are interviewed, with on-going commentary from a psychotherapist. Good tool for sensitizing counselors and other adults. 40 minutes.

Be True to Yourself – Gay married couple and human rights activists speak caringly to teens (available through PFLAG).

DeGrassi Junior High: He Ain't Heavy – Fourteen-year-old boy learns to accept his older brother whom he discovers is gay (available WGBH, Box 222-TV, South Esston, MA 02375).

DeGrassi Junior High: Rumor Has It – Young girl struggles with her own sexual orientation while rumors begin that an admired teacher is lesbian. Illustrates the viciousness of rumors and the irrelevance of sexual orientation for being a good teacher (available WGBH, Box 222-TV, South Esston, MA 02375).

Families Come Out – Includes twenty-four-page educational and resource guide (available through PFLAG).

Gay and Lesbian Youth Making History in Massachusetts – Recounts Governor's Commission and the aftermath (available from Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth).

Gay Youth – Explores the experiences of two teenagers in detail and six to a lesser extent. Demonstrates how love and acceptance can make a positive difference for a lesbian or gay teen.

Growing Up Gay and Lesbian – Includes strategies for effective living while addressing issues of self-acceptance and coming out (available at 800-561-4300).

Hate, Homophobia, and Schools – Discussion format of youth and adults (available from Wisconsin Public Television's Cooperative Education Service Agency, 800-633-7445).

Homo Teens – Five portraits of very different teens allowed to speak for themselves (available from Joan Jubila, P.O. Box 1966, New York, NY 10013).

It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School – Explores the teaching of tolerance in six different classrooms. Excellent (available from Women's Educational Media, San Francisco, 415-641-4632).

On Being Gay – Excerpts from Brian McNaught's acclaimed workshops combating homophobia.

Out: Stories of Lesbian and Gay Youth – Chronicles the struggles and victories of a group of diverse lesbian and gay youth in Canada (available at 800-267-7710).

Pride and Prejudice: The Life and Times of Gay and Lesbian Youth – Focuses on a Toronto weekly youth group showing the significance of this service for teens (available at 416-924-2100).

Safe Schools: Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Students (available from Donna Brathwaite, Safe Schools Program, Massachusetts Department of Education, 617-388-3300, ext. 409. Plan to send blank tape).

Sexual Orientation: Issues Facing Gay and Lesbian Youth (available from Wisconsin Public Television's Cooperative Education Service Agency, 800-622-7445).

Straight from the Heart – Parents talk about their lesbian and gay offspring.

Teaching Respect – Produced by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network. This video explains why educators should be concerned about homophobia and abuse in school (available at 212-727-0135).

The Statistics

COMING OUT

Males median age 13-14 (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1993)

Females median age 18 (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1993)

59% of LGB students were out before first year:

64% male; 50% female (Sherrill & Hardesty, 1994)

SUICIDE

Nearly all LGB suicides are between 16 & 21. (Pollak, 1985)

26% of LGB students have attempted suicide;

8% report a suicidal ideation (Sherrill and Hardesty, 1994)

30% of LGB youth attempt suicide near age 15

(Pediatrics Magazine as cited by Sherrill and Hardesty)

Suicide is the leading cause of death for LGB teens.

(a study in 1989 cited by Sherrill and Hardesty)

HOMOPHOBIA AND HARASSMENT ON CAMPUS

11% of LGB students received hate mail.

48% of LGB students experienced verbal abuse.

11% of LGB students survived a physical assault.

33% of LGB students reported harassment.

18% of LGB students had person property vandalized or defaced. (Sherrill and Hardesty 1994)

Blumfeld, W.J., & Raymond, D. (1993). Looking at gay and lesbian life (Updated and expanded edition). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Pollak, M. (1985). Male homosexuality. In P.A. Aries & A. Bejin (Eds.), Western Sexuality. New York, NY: Blackwell.

Sherrill, J., & Hardesty, C.A. (1994). The gay, lesbian, and bisexual students' guide to colleges, universities, and graduate schools. New York, NY: New York University Press.

LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL YOUTHS AT RISK

Findings from the 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Conducted in High Schools by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

2.6% of females and 2.5% of males had same-sex sexual contact

4.4% of all students and 6.4% of sexually experienced students have had same-sex contact and/or describe themselves as lesbian, gay, or bisexual

Reported Behavior	LGB*	Other MA**	National ***
Attempted suicide in the past year	36.5%	8.9%	8.7%
Was in a physical fight in the past year	62.3%	37.3%	38.7%
Skipped school in past month because of feeling unsafe en route to or at school	20.1%	4.5%	4.7%
Was threatened/injured with a weapon at school in the past year	28.8%	6.7%	8.4%
Smoked cigarettes in past thirty days	62.1%	35.2%	34.8%
Used cocaine in their life	31%	6.8%	7.0%
Was pregnant or had gotten someone pregnant(% among sexually active students only)	31.6%	11.8%	6.9%

*LGB: Youths who identified as gay or lesbian, and those who have had same sex sexual experiences.
**Other MA: Massachusetts youth who are not LGB as defined above.
***National: Survey results from 35 states; N=10,904 students from 110 schools. See Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, September 27, 1996, Volume 45, No. SS-4.

CDC95

Suicide

RISK FACTORS IN GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH SUICIDE

GENERAL

- Awareness/identification of homosexual orientation at an early age
- Conflicts with other related to homosexual orientation
- Problems in homosexual relationships

SOCIETY

- Discrimination/oppression of homosexuals by society
- Minimal and negative portrayal of homosexual relationships

POOR SELF-ESTEEM

- Internalization of image of homosexuals as sick and bad
- Internalization of image of homosexuals as helpless and destructive

IDENTITY CONFLICTS

- Denial of a homosexual orientation
- Despair in recognition of a homosexual orientation

FAMILY

- Rejection of child due to homosexual orientation
- Abuse/harassment of child due to homosexual orientation
- Failure of child to meet parental/social expectation
- Perceived rejection of child due to homosexual orientation

RELIGION

- Child's homosexual orientation seen as incompatible with family religious beliefs
- Youth feels sinful, condemned to hell due to homosexual orientation

SCHOOL

- Abuse/harassment of homosexual youth by peers
- Lack of accurate information about homosexuality

SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Refection of homosexual youth by friends and peers
- Social withdrawal of homosexual youth
- Loneliness and inability to meet others like themselves

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Substance use to relieve pain of oppression
- Substance use to reduce inhibitions on homosexual feelings

PROFESSIONAL HELP

- Refusal to accept homosexual orientation of youth
- Refusal to support homosexual orientation of youth
- Involuntary treatment to change homosexual orientations of youth
- Inability to discuss issues related to homosexuality

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

- Refusal to accept/support homosexual orientation of youth
- Isolation of homosexual youth by staff and residents

Inability to support homosexual youth in conflicts with residents

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

Inability to develop relationship skills like heterosexual youth

Extreme dependency needs due to prior emotional deprivation

CORRELATION BETWEEN SUICIED, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND GAY/LESBIAN CONFLICT

Statistics show that suicide is at least three times greater among lesbian and gay men.

Although recognized by clinicians in the gay and lesbian community, the relationship between homosexuality and youth suicide has been virtually ignored by the school system and the media.

Substance abuse ahs been consistently linked to increases risk of suicide.

Statistics indicate that lesbians and gay men are at much greater risk than the general population for substance abuse. Frequently cited reasons include attempts to cope with loss and depression through alcohol and drugs, resorting to abuse as a result of societal oppression, and the role of bars as social meeting places for lesbians and gay men,

Traditional recovery networks are closed to this group; often the support groups such as the family, church and school alienate gay men and lesbians by rejecting them, ostracizing them, or denying their existence.

Taboos surrounding the free and open discussion of homosexuality impede people in the school environment from facing a major factor that is often involved. As a consequence, major school suicide prevention programs are not effective because the youngsters feel constrained in revealing their true feelings.

Source: Project 10, Los Angeles Public Schools

ARTICLES ON LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANGENDER LIFE

Articles on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Life. The abstract is provided below the title of the document. Please click on the title to learn more information or to read about each article.

African Americans

African Americans who engage in same-sex sexual practices and/or who lead cross-gendered lives have always been a part of black and glbtq communities. However, at times their presence in both groups has either gone unrecognized or been highly contested. The creation of black glbtq communities beginning in the mid-nineteenth century has provided African Americans who are "in the life" with greater opportunities to be themselves without having to fear rejection or marginalization.

Black and White Men Together

The National Association of Black and White Men Together is an organization with a double purpose. It educates association members and the public about racial and glbtq issues and it provides opportunities for racially-mixed couples to socialize in an open and accepting atmosphere. Black and White Men Together (BWMT) was founded by Michael Smith, a white man whose African-American partners included Glenn Burke, the first major league baseball player to come out publicly as gay (albeit after his retirement from the sport).

The Closet

The word "closet" designates a space of secrecy, confidentiality, or cautious privacy. We say that a gay person is "in the closet" or "closeted" when she or he dissimulates the object of her or his sexual desire. Coming out of the closet, though, as Didier Eribon has remarked, can never be achieved once and for all. The gesture must be repeated in each and every new context.

Coming Out

"Coming out" is commonly defined as a revelation or acknowledgment that one is a member of a sexual minority. The phrase, which borrows the vocabulary of the debutante ball in which young women are presented to society, is used in a number of ways. While it is often employed as a shorthand for "coming out of the closet" and living openly as a lesbian or gay man, the term also frequently refers to a person's first same-sex sexual experience, his or her self-acceptance as a homosexual, a person's participation in the gay and lesbian community, and an individual's revelation of his or her sexual orientation to others. Perhaps most significantly, coming out is a process that is both personal and social, as individuals move from discovery to acceptance to revelation.

Coming Out Stories

Coming out stories, both written and oral, have for many years been a staple of lesbian and gay culture building. No matter how sophisticated or theoretical we become, when groups of lesbians or gay men congregate, a usual suggestion is to share coming out stories. The coming out experience is so important that it tends to be the focus of a great deal of gay and lesbian literature, including novels and short stories. In recent years, several collections of lesbian coming out narratives have appeared to an eagerly awaiting readership.

Demographics of the LGBT Population

Assessing the demographic characteristics of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender population can be a daunting challenge, in part because sexual orientation and gender identification are not easily measured constructs, data are relatively rare, and the glbtq population can be reluctant to identify themselves as such in surveys. Defining gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals by reported sexual attraction, behavior, or identification can yield different groups of people with different characteristics. Further, few data sources that can be generalized to the population include questions about sexual orientation, behavior, or attraction; and even fewer ask questions about gender identification. While most evidence suggests that the stigmatization of homosexual behavior in the United States and throughout the world is being reduced, it is still an important factor in the lives of glbtq people and for glbtq research.

Developmental Stages of the Coming Out Process

Presents a developmental mode of the coming-out process which can be helpful in understanding the unique identity formation of individuals with same-sex feelings and interests, or homosexuals. Stages of sexual identity development; Description of the exploration stage; Information on how to help gay men and lesbians through developmental stages.

The effect of identity development and perceived university environment on the college adjustment of gay, lesbian, and bisexual college students

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) students face many challenges as they adjust to a college environment. They struggle with the task of adjusting to an institution that they might perceive as threatening and hostile. Although college is a time of adjustment for all students, GLB students must learn to survive within an institution that is primarily designed to educate and support heterosexual students. GLB college students are clearly at a greater emotional and psychological risk, particularly when they are in the process of developing their sexual identity. They are, perhaps for the first time, experiencing questions about the congruency of their behavior and appropriate labels. The study explores the hypothesis that perceived university environment and level of identity development/formation are factors that are predictive of adjustment for GLB college students, using information gathered from 102 participants. The study was analyzed using correlations, regressions, and factor analysis. Results show that there is a relationship between some stages of identity development and college adjustment, but student perceptions of the university environment is a

stronger predictor of adjustment. Findings are pertinent to college personnel and university counselors who are challenged with creating an environment that encourages an atmosphere that facilitates adaptation and adjustment to college.

Fraternities and Sororities

Glbtq students are involved in both traditional Greek-letter societies and in gay-oriented fraternities and sororities. Although many gay and lesbian groups have gained acceptance on college campuses, one area in which openly glbtq students continue to experience discrimination is in the generally conservative Greek system of fraternities and sororities. A large proportion of gay and lesbian students who are members of traditional fraternities and sororities are closeted. Studies have shown that most gay fraternity members stay in the closet for fear of reprisals from their fellow brothers in the fraternity; however, while some exceptions exist, when lesbian and bisexual women have come out to their sorority sisters, reactions are generally more positive and supportive.

Gawking, Gaping, Staring

Presents opinion on transsexualism. Information on African American disabled William Johnson.

Gay-Straight Alliances

A gay-straight alliance (GSA) can be defined as a youth-led, school- or community-based group that provides a safe, welcoming, and affirming physical and emotional space for glbtq students, as well as those who are perceived as glbtq, those who are questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, children from glbtq families, and heterosexual students who want to be allies of their glbtq peers. The inclusion of straight youth in the group mission and sponsored activities of GSAs is an important distinguishing factor from early support groups for glbtq teens, and recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach to youth safety. This strategy assists glbtq youth in building a diverse network of support, teaches heterosexual youth how to be effective allies to their glbtq peers, and teaches all youth about the effects of discrimination and prejudice. GSA participation also seems to shield youth from the negative influence of verbal and physical violence, alienation, and other forms of oppression based in homophobia and heterosexism.

Gender

The theory that gender relations are socially constructed categories of meaning has opened up a number of new areas in lesbian, gay, and queer studies. Traditionally, the division of human beings into two genders based on the biological differences between males and females has been viewed as one of the most natural, common-sense categories of identity. In this binary model, "sex," "gender," and "sexuality" constitute a unified whole. Thus a biologically sexed male is assumed to be innately masculine, with appropriately masculine appearance, character traits, and behaviors, including feelings of sexual attraction to people of the "opposite" sex--that is, to biologically sexed females, who--just as "naturally"--display appropriately feminine appearance, character traits, behaviors, and (hetero)sexual preference.

Hate Crimes

Hate Crimes is a recent category in the law that distinguishes crimes against a person or his or her property when motivated by bias towards a group or groups from the same crimes when not animated by the offending bias. Types of offending bias include crimes motivated by the victim's race, color, religion, national origin, and, more controversially, sexual orientation and gender identity. Whereas demarcating a category in the law for crimes animated by a desire to inflict some form of harm on a member of a group characterized by its racial heritage or religious beliefs may rest comfortably with most Americans, who tend to react negatively against racial or religious bias, the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as categories has proved more challenging, perhaps because of the ambiguous social status of gay men, lesbians, and transgendered persons in American society, or, in the case of gender, the question of whether it is appropriate to consider crimes of rape or domestic violence, already fairly well-delineated in the criminal law, as hate crimes against women.

Homophobia and the Black Community: A Changing Tide

The question, whether Afro-American community more homophobic than other communities, often evolves into a discussion of the significance of the role of the church in the Afro-American community. The author does not believe the Afro-American community is any more homophobic than any other community. The author can only speak from his experience as a member of the Afro-American community, the sting of homophobia is a lot more intense and cuts deeper when it's coming from folks who look like him. He agrees that the church plays a strong role in the Afro-American community. Even though he doesn't believe the Afro-American community is any more homophobic, it doesn't diminish the fact that homophobia is alive, well, and living in the Afro-American community.

Identity

Although the topic of homosexual identity is a complex one, it has polarized activists, theorists, and literary critics into two primary camps: essentialists and constructionists. The former (usually labeled "essentialist" by their detractors rather than embracing the term themselves) believe that the lesbian and gay sense of "self" is natural, fundamental, and historically constant. Often arguing from a biological, psychological, or other scientific basis, the essentialists emphasize the transhistorical similarities in the experiences of men and women attracted to members of the same sex. Constructionists, on the other hand, often utilizing methodologies of critical theory, philosophy, economics, and historicism, argue that constructions of identity, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are historically contingent, that homosexuality as it is understood today came into being only in the late nineteenth century, and that prior manifestations of same-sex desire were vastly different from what we today call the gay and lesbian experience of self-hood.

Identity Politics

Not limited to activity in the traditionally conceived political sphere, identity politics refers to activism, politics, theorizing, and other similar activities based on the shared experiences of members of a specific social group (often relying on shared experiences of oppression). Groups who engage in identity politics include not only those organized around sexual and gender identities, but also around such identities as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and disability. These groups engage in such activities as community organizing and consciousness-raising, as well as participating in political and social movements.

Information on the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) is a national organization in the United States dedicated to creating safe K-12 school environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. Its mission is to reform the American educational system in order to ensure that children accept and respect one another, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. Members of GLSEN work to combat homophobia and heterosexism in schools by educating students, teachers, administrators, and the general public about the causes and effects of anti-glbtq prejudice and violence.

Intersexuality

Intersexuality is a congenital anomaly of sexual differentiation. It is usually related to atypical sex chromosome combinations or fetal hormone levels, and may result in external genitalia or internal reproductive systems that fall outside the norms for either male or female bodies. Specialists estimate that in 1 or 2 births per 1000 the appearance of the genitals is ambiguous enough to raise questions about the individual's anatomical sex. Because modern Western European culture treats the anatomical sex of the body at birth as the basis for assigning social gender (boy or girl), intersex conditions represent a crisis for contemporary notions of sex, gender, and identity.

Lesbian Feminism

In the United States, Canada and Britain, lesbian feminism was the dominant ideology among politicized lesbians during the 1970s and 1980s. Based on the premise that lesbianism and feminism were inextricably linked, the two words were often hyphenated. Lesbian feminism offered a trenchant critique of patriarchy and the institutionalization of heterosexuality, and claimed that its political impact resided in resistance to male domination. Put into practice, lesbian feminism quickly evolved into a personal style that influenced everything from hairstyles, clothing, and even sexual behavior.

Male Lesbianism

Discusses male lesbianism, imaginary identification of nineteenth-century French male authors with lesbians. Two broad categories of homosexuals, according to Marcel Proust; Issue on whether a gay man who occupies the feminine psychic position is a male lesbian; Good reasons for not thinking of Marcel simply as a lesbian.

My Body, My Closet

Discusses the dynamics inherent in the analogies of social identities. Politics of visibility and invisibility; Discussion on lesbian-femme and nonvisible disability.

New Direction in Multiethnic, Racial, and Global Queer Studies

This article presents a series of essays that were presented as part of a panel discussion sponsored by the Women's Gender Studies Program at the University of Missouri, Columbia held on April 11, 2003. Since their emergence in the 1990's, queer theory and queer studies have functioned primarily as denaturalizing discourses, deconstructing power relations by asserting the incoherence and contingency of identity categories and cultural regimes of the normal. However, the rapid emergence of racial, ethnic, colonial/postcolonial, cross-cultural, and national/transnational engagements and approaches in queer studies has often contested this deconstructive framework, arguing instead for a local and global elaboration of queer identities and communities. In this panel discussion we consider what is at stake in these contemporary multicultural and transitional strains of queer studies. What are the challenges, conflicts, and/or mutual investments of race/ethnicity studies and LGBTQ studies? How does queer theory reconstitute fields such as African American studies, Asian American studies, and Latin American studies? How do these fields in turn reconstitute the strategies and priorities of queer studies? Perhaps, most important, what does the project of queer ethnicities look like now?

New Right

The emergence of a political "New Right" in the United States during the last two decades of the twentieth century has been of particular importance to glbtq people because of its record of open hostility to glbtq rights. Reacting to the political and social gains of the gay and lesbian movement--as well as the feminist, Black, and other minority rights movements--the neoconservatives of the late 1970s and after especially opposed abortion rights and what they came to call "the gay agenda." The New Right, as opposed to previous conservative movements, combined evangelical Christian views of morality with a political agenda. Typical of the New Right are the Reverend Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and the Reverend Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, organizations founded to channel a specific moral and social vision into politics, primarily through the Republican party.

Outing

Outing is a term that refers to the public revelation of a person's sexuality without the consent of the person. Although outing has a long history, until recently it was a homophobic tactic. Homophobic organizations such as vice squads and the military, politicians

who aimed to smear their opponents, and newspapers that practiced yellow journalism were generally the ones engaged in outing. In the 1980s, however, the media began to expose various gay and lesbian celebrities as a way of selling magazines.

Parades and Marches

Both parades and marches serve to render a community visible, but the purposes of the two kinds of events are different. Marches typically have the goal of effecting political or social change, whereas parades are celebratory. In practice, the distinction is not always so clear: some contingents in a parade may bear messages of political protest, and marches may have festive elements or be part of a larger program that includes concerts or picnics and similar events. Pride parades have become significant events in most North American cities and in many European and Asian cities as well.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG)

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), an international non-profit organization that operates out of Washington, D. C., works to support glbtq people and their loved ones. Stemming from parents' desire to be involved in their gay and lesbian children's struggle for equality, PFLAG has been an inspiration to and resource for countless families since the 1970s. Sexual minorities differ from racial, ethnic, and national minorities, who may face discrimination and disdain, but who develop within their families important systems of support and nurturance. In contrast, glbtq individuals generally grow up in families in which their minority sexual orientation or gender identity is concealed, ignored, or condemned.

Queer Nation

Queer Nation erupted into being in the summer of 1990, when militant AIDS activists at New York's Gay Pride parade passed out to the assembled crowd an inflammatory manifesto, printed on both sides of a single newspaper-sized piece of newsprint, bearing the titles I Hate Straights! and Queers Read This! Within days, in response to the brash, "in-your-face" tone of the broadside, Queer Nation chapters had sprung up in San Francisco and other major cities. Described by activist scholars Allan Bérubé and Jeffrey Escoffier as the first "retro-future/postmodern" activist group to address gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender concerns, the short-lived organization (lasting only two years) made a lasting impact on sexual identity politics in the United States. To a significant degree, the relative frequency and acceptability of glbtq representation in mass culture in the 1990s and early twenty-first century can be dated to the emergence of Queer Nation.

Rainbow Flag

The rainbow flag, a popular and internationally recognized symbol of gay and lesbian pride, was designed by Gilbert Baker in 1978. In response to the request of the committee organizing the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade for a symbol that could be used year after year, Baker created a flag with eight horizontal stripes of different colors. After two huge rainbow flags were flown at the parade that year, the symbol gained immediate popularity in the San Francisco gay community. In Gilbert's original design, each of the eight colors represented a concept.

Separatism

While some in the glbtq community have struggled for integration into mainstream society, others have chosen to separate themselves from it. In this context, the term "separatism" refers to the process by which a minority group chooses to break away from a larger group. At the same time, "separatism" may be used to describe how members of a group (no matter how marginal) prevent those designated as "outsiders" from joining it. Thus, separatism refers not only to attempts to create alternatives to straight society, but also to exclusionary practices within the glbtq community itself.

Sexual Orientation

The phrase sexual orientation is used to describe erotic attraction toward people of the same gender (homosexual), the opposite gender (heterosexual), or both (bisexual). Like any such simplistic categorization, definitions are not easy to make and are problematic. There is an assumption that the label "heterosexual" is to be reserved for people who have sexual interactions only with members of the other sex, and this implies that those who do not do so are classed as homosexuals, regardless of the number of same-sex sexual relationships they have had and even if the number of opposite sex relationships far outnumber them.

Stonewall Riots

The weekend of June 27-29,1969 was a turning point in the struggle for glbtq equality. Gay and lesbian activism certainly existed prior to this time, but the confrontations between police and demonstrators at the Stonewall Inn in New York City catalyzed the movement and inspired gay men and lesbians to move their cause to entirely new heights utilizing entirely new tactics. The birth of the Gay Pride Movement was not without controversy, however, and there continue to be debates about what actually occurred during the riots. Nevertheless, the Stonewall "Rebellion" indisputably holds an honored, if contentious, place in glbtq mythology and history.

Symbols

The symbols of glbtq pride are diverse in origin and meaning, but they serve the crucial purpose of rendering visible communities that have been erased or marginalized. Moreover, they assert a defiant and sometimes hard-won self-esteem in the face of discrimination and oppression. Pink and black triangles come from the horrors of the Holocaust but have been reclaimed as signs of solidarity and determination. The labrys is an ancient icon whose importance still resonates.

Transgender Issues in Education

Prior to the late 1990s, few educational institutions recognized the hostility of their climates for transgender students, staff, and faculty. But with youth whose self-identification or expression challenges traditional notions of "male" and "female" becoming much more visible on American campuses, some administrators have begun to consider the needs of transgender people and to change policies that discriminate against them. Many school officials, however, still lack any understanding of transgender issues and only become cognizant of the community's concerns when a crisis arises, such as a conflict over a transitioning woman using the women's restroom.

Unitarian/Universalists

Unitarian Universalism is a Protestant denomination that supports freedom of religious thought, rejects dogma in favor of reason, and incorporates humanistic values in its teachings. The modern day Unitarian Universalist church in the United States came about with the merging of the two former denominations in 1961 to become the Unitarian Universalist Association. Historically, both denominations took progressive positions on the role of women and supported abolition of slavery and other social reforms. The combined denomination has been outspoken in support of human rights--including, since 1970, those of sexual minorities.