



# Safe Zone Ally Manual

2012

Dear Safe Zone Ally,

Welcome to the Safe Zone Program! Your willingness to serve as an advocate and visible resource for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community at the Houston Community College (HCC) is greatly appreciated!

This resource guide has been designed to help you in accurately responding to the needs of the students, faculty, administrators, or staff who seek your assistance. Though it only represents a fraction of the information available on LGBT issues, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents as it will inform you on your role as an ally in the Safe Zone program. This resource guide is an ongoing project; therefore it is essential that you forward new and pertinent information to the Allies at any time.

It is our hope that you will display your Safe Zone symbol with pride, for you are advancing the mission of the college by creating and maintaining a more inclusive campus environment for all members of the campus community.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to Julie Smith of University of Houston-Clear Lake for allowing us free access to materials and information depicted in this handbook.

Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271 (on behalf of the HCC Diversity Council)

Last updated December, 2011

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**SECTION 1:**  
**HCC SAFE ZONE**  
**PROGRAM**

Although we recognize that there are distinctions, it is important to note that when we refer to the LGBT community, we are including those who are intersex, questioning, or allies.

## INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM MISSION

As stated in our institution's mission, the HCC is first and foremost an institution of higher learning, "whose primary role is to provide fair and equitable learning opportunities to graduate and undergraduate students" (Role and Scope Statement, 2008). Additionally, "the University's faculty, staff, and administrators are committed to providing a humane, responsive, and intellectually stimulating environment for productive learning and working" (Role and Scope Statement, 2008). The HCC Safe Zone Program has been designed to further these goals.

Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising the broadest possible diversity of persons. Included in this diversity are the members of the LGBT community. The LGBT community is often the target of discrimination that has resulted in diminished opportunities for equal participation in our society. The HCC Safe Zone Program works to ensure that such loss does not occur on campus by establishing a place that is free of stereotypical barriers and promotes tolerance and respect for individuals of all sexualities and gender identities.

The HCC Safe Zone Program has been created to respond to the needs of the HCC community. The mission of this program is to provide a welcoming environment for LGBT students, staff, administrators, and faculty that reflect the highest ethical standards of our university and society.

## GOALS:

The HCC Safe Zone Program will:

1. Work to ensure all members of the LGBT community will be treated with dignity and respect;
2. Assist LGBT students, staff, administrators, and faculty achieve their educational and career goals, by creating an inclusive, safe environment for learning and working;
3. Provide the LGBT community with support, safety, and referral regarding LGBT related issues;
4. Work to ensure HCC policies, procedures, and practices reflect and promote a just, open, and an affirming environment for LGBT students, staff, administrators, and faculty;
5. Identify a network of allies who are concerned and empathetic about LGBT issues.

## HCC Safe Zone Ally Agreement

The HCC Safe Zone program is designed to further the mission of the university by helping to create a safe and supportive campus environment for all members of the HCC community. Specifically, this program was created to address the unique needs of those members of the community who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. This segment of the world's population is often the target of discrimination which diminishes the opportunity for equal participation in society. By choosing to become a Safe Zone Ally, I have agreed to take a personal stand against such discrimination on campus.

In becoming an Ally, I will be an advocate and visible resource for the LGBT population at HCC. With my signature below, I certify that I fully understand and willingly accept the responsibilities which come with this role. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, respecting the privacy of each individual, using language appropriate to the person's stage of development, being prepared to serve in a variety of capacities depending upon the needs of the individual, knowing the limits of my expertise and comfort, referring individuals to counseling when appropriate, consulting with the program Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271 if I have questions, displaying the Safe Zone logo in highly visible locations, not sharing my Safe Zone sign or buttons with others, staying updated on resources, and maintaining the credibility of the program by not misusing my status as a Safe Zone Ally.

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Print Name

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Date

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Signature

## Ally Removal Process

As stated previously in the Ally Manual, the mission of the Safe Zone program is to provide a welcoming environment for LGBT students, staff, and faculty that reflects the highest ethical standards of our university and society. The overall goal of the program is to promote positive change in the atmosphere of our campus. In order for these goals to be achieved, it is critical that the program and its participants are held in high regard amongst the members of the HCC community. With this in mind, it is important for Allies to be accountable for actions which go against or are damaging to the purpose and prestige of the Safe Zone program. This accountability will be gained by providing the public the opportunity to report misuse of one's Safe Zone Ally status. Anonymous concerns or complaints can be sent to our department. Following an inquiry, if allegations of misuse are substantiated, Ally status will be revoked and all program materials must be returned.

## Withdrawal from Program

Should an Ally decide that he or she no longer wishes to participate in the program, a letter of withdrawal can be sent to the Diversity Council c/o Office of Institutional Equity at anytime throughout the year. Upon receiving the letter of withdrawal, the Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271 will contact the person to set up a brief exit interview. After completion of the interview, the person will be removed from all lists of Allies. The person must also return the Safe Zone placard and button.

The list of Allies will be reviewed at the end of each academic year. At that time, all Allies will be asked whether or not they wish to continue participation in the program. Those wishing to withdraw at that time will also need to schedule a brief exit interview and return program materials to the Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271.



# SECTION 2: BEING AN ALLY

## WHAT IS AN ALLY?

An ally is...

"a person who is a member of the 'dominant' or 'majority' group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for, the oppressed population" (*Washington & Evans, 2000, p. 313*).

"Allies are those who support gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender (GLBT) people, but do not identify as part of the GLBT community. Allies believe in the human rights of all people and demonstrate their celebration of diversity among people by their presence and actions." *from [www.msu.edu/~spectrum/allies](http://www.msu.edu/~spectrum/allies).*

When sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are the issues around which people form an alliance, the members of the LGBT community are not the only ones who benefit. Although they may be more direct beneficiaries of the support provided, **all of us** are rewarded when **any of us** takes steps toward eliminating prejudice and discrimination. Promoting the rights, dignity, and equality of LGBT persons helps create a society in which we are all afforded the respect we deserve.

An ally is a person who<sup>1</sup>:

1. Believes in the equality and dignity of LGBT people and their right to live and pursue their goals free from intolerance, discrimination, and harassment.
2. Believes our society is enriched by the acceptance and inclusion of LGBT people.
3. Works to develop an understanding of homosexuality and bisexuality and the needs of LGBT people.
4. Believes that his/her own growth and development will be enhanced by his/her alliance with LGBT people.
5. Is committed to the personal growth-in spite of the probability of discomfort-required in taking steps to confront homophobia and heterosexism.
6. Takes a stand against prejudice and discrimination.
7. Acknowledges and accepts responsibility for her/his own prejudices.
8. Is willing to examine and relinquish privileges afforded to her/him by society based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.
9. Knows that because of attitudes toward and the lack of legal rights afforded to LGBT people, heterosexual people often have more power in initiating change toward personal, institutional, and societal justice equality.
10. Is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and respecting the privacy of LGBT people.
11. Expects to make some mistakes, but does not use fear of this as an excuse for non-action.

12. Is motivated to educate others, without being self-righteous and with the goals of creating understanding and building bridges across difference.
13. Has a vision of an inclusive, multicultural society free from prejudice and discrimination.
14. Is clear about her/his personal motivations to become an ally.
15. Listens openly and non-judgmentally.
16. Chooses to align with LGBT people to support them and respond to their needs.
17. Has a sense of humor!

## ALLY BEHAVIOR<sup>2</sup>

Allies to racial, religious, and ethnic minorities have been remarkably effective in promoting positive change in the dominant culture throughout history. Only recently has such instrumental support been extended to the members of the LGBT community. Heterosexual allies are some of the most effective, powerful advocates and greatest sources of support for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender movement.

### An Ally Strives To...

- be a friend and a listener
- be open-minded
- have her or his own opinions
- be willing to talk
- commit him or herself to personal growth in spite of the discomfort sometimes caused
- recognize his or her own prejudices
- join others with a common purpose
- believe that all persons regardless of age, sex, race, gender, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation should be treated with dignity and respect
- engage in the process of developing a culture free of homophobia or heterosexism
- recognize his or her mistakes, but not use them as an excuse
- be responsible for responding to homophobia
- recognize the legal powers and privileges that heterosexuals have which LGBT people are denied
- educate others regarding the needs, contributions, and rights of the LGBT community
- understand the boundaries of an ally's role.

### An Ally is Not...

- someone with ready-made answers
- required to be a counselor
- expected to be expert on LGBT related issues
- expected to proceed with an interaction if levels of comfort or personal safety have been violated

### GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR SAFE ZONE ALLIES<sup>3</sup>

- Respect each individual's privacy and keep contacts confidential. This is an essential part of creating a welcoming, safe environment for those in need of your support.
- Try to use language that reflects where the person is in his/her development. For example, a person may be exploring his/her sexuality and may not identify as LGBT even though she/he is engaging in same-sex relationships.
- You may find yourself being an advocate, advisor, teacher, mentor, or friend to students, staff, administrators, and faculty who seek your support. Please be prepared to take on the role needed by the person seeking assistance.
- Know the limits of your expertise and comfort level. Even with the best intentions, misinformation can be harmful to the person seeking help. Refer support seekers to other Allies or the Office of Institutional Equity if you are unable to or uncomfortable providing the type of support that person needs.
- Refer students for counseling when appropriate. If a student is experiencing psychological distress and is having difficulty coping, suggest that counseling may be helpful.
- Consult with the Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271 whenever you have questions or would like feedback on how to support or advise a student.
- Safe Zone sign and button should be placed in highly visible locations. If your Safe Zone sign is defaced or torn down, please notify Diversity Council c/o Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271. They will work with the HCC Police Department to investigate the situation.
- Please do not share with or provide your Safe Zone sign to friends or colleagues that are not Safe Zone Allies. Urge them to complete the Safe Zone Orientation themselves!
- Stay updated on your resources. Please notify the Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271 if you know of any other resources not listed in Section 4.
- If you have concerns that another Ally is inappropriately using his/her status as a Safe Zone Ally, please contact Diversity Council c/o Office of Institutional Equity 713 718-8271.

### WHEN TO REFER A STUDENT TO COUNSELING SERVICES<sup>4</sup>

Most of the students you will encounter will be seeking support, advice, or information. Occasionally, you may advise a student who is experiencing a good deal of psychological distress. This may be evident in the following ways:

- When a student states they are no longer able to function in their normal capacity within their classes. Example: they have seen a drop in grades or academic performance.
- When a student can no longer cope with their day-to-day activities and responsibilities. Example: they are no longer going to classes or they have been late for their job and may soon be fired if this continues.

## DEFINING HOMOPHOBIA

**Homophobia:** The fear, hatred, disgust, mistreatment or intolerance of same-sex intimacy relationships, “atypical” gender behavior, and/or people who identify as or are perceived as LGBT

**Heterosexism:** The belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality and, thereby, it’s a right to dominance. Carries with it the assumption that everyone one meets is heterosexual.

Homophobia refers to the many ways in which people are oppressed on the basis of sexual orientation. Sometimes homophobia is intentional, where there is a clear intent to hurt lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons. Homophobia can also be unintentional where there is no desire to hurt anyone, but where people are unaware of the consequences of their actions.

There are four distinct but interrelated types of homophobia: personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural. Institutional and cultural homophobia is often referred to as heterosexism.

**Personal homophobia** is prejudice. It is the personal belief that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are sinful, immoral, sick, inferior to heterosexuals, or incomplete women and men. Prejudice towards any group is learned behavior; people have to be taught to be prejudiced.

Personal homophobia is sometimes experienced as the fear of being perceived as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This fear can lead to trying to “prove” one’s heterosexuality. Anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, can experience personal homophobia. When this happens with lesbians, gay, and bisexual people, it is sometimes called “internalized homophobia.”

**Institutional homophobia** refers to the many ways in which government, business, religious institutions, and other institutions and organizations discriminate against people on the basis of sexual orientation. These organizations and institutions set policies, allocate resources, and maintain both written and unwritten standards for the behavior of their members in ways that discriminate.

For example, many religious organizations have stated policies against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people holding offices; many schools fail or refuse to allocate funds and

**Interpersonal homophobia** is the fear, dislike, or hatred of people believed to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This hatred or dislike may be expressed by name-calling, verbal and physical harassment, and individual acts of discrimination or by the rejection of friends, co-workers, and/or family members.

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are regularly attacked for no other reason than their assailants’ homophobia. Most people act out their fears of lesbians and gay men in non-violent, more commonplace ways. Relatives often shun their lesbian and gay family members; co-workers are distant and cold to lesbian and gay employees; or people simply never ask about acquaintances’ lives.

**Cultural homophobia** refers to social standards and norms that dictate that being heterosexual is better or more moral than being lesbian or gay, and that everyone is heterosexual or should be. While these standards are not written down as such, they are spelled out each day in the television shows and print advertisements where virtually every character is heterosexual and every sexual relationship involves a female and a male; or in the assumption made by most adults in social situations that all “normal” children will eventually be attracted to and marry a person of the other sex.

## THE HETEROSEXUAL ALLY DEVELOPMENT MODEL<sup>5</sup>

This five stage developmental model describes (in general terms) the stages a heterosexual ally goes through beginning in childhood. There is no set time frame for each stage. Therefore, it is important to understand your development stage in order to become an effective ally.

Innocence:	Until the age of five, prior to social consciousness, individuals have no assumptions about sexual or gender-appropriate behaviors.
Ignorance:	Misinformation about LGBT people learned from family members, peers, faith communities, schools, the media, etc. is accepted without question.
Resistance:	Individuals become aware of the oppression of LGBT people. Feelings of guilt, shame, and anger often accompany the awareness. These feelings may lead some individuals to become overwhelmed and to shut down. Others may feel motivated to actively confront societal oppression.
Redefinition:	Individuals become aware of their privilege as heterosexuals. They band together to end anti-LGBT oppression and understand how heterosexism is related to other forms of societal oppression, such as sexism.
Internalization	Individuals identify as heterosexual allies. This identity becomes an integrated part of the self, co-existing among other identities.

## WAYS THAT HETEROSEXISM AND HOMOPHOBIA HURT LGBT PEOPLE<sup>6</sup>

### For those in the closet

- Creates the necessity 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 else is around.
- Having people try to "fix you up" with members of the opposite sex.
- Unsolicited advice such as "you'll never catch a man/woman if you act/dress like that"
- Assumptions that you and everyone else are heterosexual.
- Being around people who are "flaunting" their heterosexuality while having to hide your sexuality.
- Having a hard time finding/meeting other lesbian, gay, or bisexual people.
- Thinking you are the only one.
- Thinking something is wrong with you.
- Never feeling that you fit in; constantly feeling uncomfortable.
- Never feeling safe/close to another person because of this secret
- Feeling panic about being found out, and feeling like a coward or a dishonest person.

### For those coming out

- Not just the fear expressed above (which is bad enough) but also the reality – the things you were afraid would happen actually do happen.
- Rejection from family, friends, co-workers, and/or teachers.
- Rejection of other things that are important to you – your work, interests, etc.
- People refusing to accept your sexual orientation, seeing it as a phase, trying to convince you to change – "see a psychiatrist" or "you'll grow out of it."
- Having to deal with fear and anger toward you from 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 or evaluations than you think you deserve and wondering if this is why.
- Subtle rejection or distance from 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

- The things you feared would happen don't happen just once, which is hard enough, but they 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 or into groups or organizations
- Not getting accepted into graduate 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 farther apart or cross the street when you walk by, then deny they are doing this.
- Not having guaranteed civil rights protection to grieve discrimination.
- Outright legalized mistreatment such as having children taken away, being denied access to your lover, and not getting employment benefits that are given to opposite sex partners.
- Mistreatment by police officers, who may blame the victim; law courts; and the prison system.
- Dealing with people's misinformation and AIDS fears.
- Getting psychiatric/psychological abuse when seeking help.
- Lack of role models and services that meet your needs as a gay man, lesbian, or bisexual man or woman. (i.e. the library or bookstore may not stock newspapers, books, journals, that cover the LGBT community).
- Being in a position of having to educate heterosexuals about their homophobia.
- Finding that programs and educational activities about heterosexism and homophobia are not a routine part of what's happening – having to organize them yourself if they are to happen at all.

### HOW ANTI-LGBT BIAS HURTS US ALL

*At the same time the victims (or targets) of prejudice are oppressed, the perpetrators (or agents) and other members of the dominant group are hurt in some ways as well. Although the effects of oppression differ for specific target and agent groups, in the end everyone loses.*

1. Homophobia and transphobia lock all people into rigid gender roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression.
2. Homophobia and transphobia compromise the integrity of heterosexual people by pressuring them to treat others badly, actions that go against our basic humanity.
3. Homophobia and transphobia limit our ability to form close, intimate relationships with members of one's own sex.
4. Homophobia and transphobia generally limit communications with a significant portion of the population and, more specifically, limits family relationships.
5. Homophobia and transphobia prevent some lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people from developing an honest self-identity, and add to the pressure to marry and/or have children, which places undue stress on themselves and their families.
6. Homophobia and transphobia are a cause of premature sexual activity, which increases the chances of pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Young people, of all sexual identities, are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove that they are "normal".
7. Homophobia and transphobia result in the elimination of any discussion of the lives and sexuality of LGBT in curriculum, keeping important information from all students.
8. Homophobia and transphobia can be used to stigmatize, silence, and, on occasion, target people who are perceived or defined by others as LGBT, but who are, in actuality, heterosexual.



9. Homophobia and transphobia prevent heterosexuals from accepting the benefits and gifts offered by LGBT people: theoretical insights, social and spiritual visions, contribution in the arts and culture, to religion, to family life, indeed, to all parts of society.
10. Homophobia and transphobia (along with racism, sexism, classism, etc..) inhibit a unified and effective governmental and societal response to AIDS.
11. Homophobia and transphobia take energy away from more positive activities.
12. Homophobia and transphobia inhibit appreciation of other types of diversity, making it unsafe for everyone because each person has unique traits not considered mainstream or dominant. Therefore, we are all hurt when any one of us is disrespected.

*Adapted from Warren J. Blumenfeld, ed. Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price /Taken from GLSEN Safe Space.*

## What is Homophobia?

Homophobia is the irrational fear and intolerance of a person's real or perceived sexual orientation. It can be caused by hate, prejudice, fear, and/or ignorance. Anti-gay violence and hatred created by homophobia are the causes for most hate crimes in the U.S. Homophobia has different motivations, but it always leads to hurt and exclusion of others.

## What are different examples of Homophobia?

- o Using slurs such as "fag", "gay", "dyke" to express dislike or contempt of someone
- o being outspoken about gay rights, but making sure everyone knows *you* are straight
- o changing seats or walking in a different direction so you won't be too close to someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer (LGBQ)
- o if you are straight and assume someone who is LGBQ and of the same gender is attracted to you

Here are some specific manifestations of Homophobia:

**Internalized Homophobia:** The experience of shame, aversion or self-hatred in reaction to one's own feelings of attraction for a person of the same sex.

**Institutional Homophobia:** (can also be considered Heterosexism) attitudes and policies that discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity within governments, organizations, certain religions, businesses, and other institutions. For example, many groups have policies against LGBQ holding offices, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in the military, absence of positive representations of LGBQ in the media and movies, lack of funding or support for LGBQ events and groups, and proposed federal same-sex marriage bans.

## What is Heterosexism?

Assuming every person to be heterosexual therefore marginalizing persons who identify as LGBQ. It is also believing heterosexuality to be superior to homosexuality.

## What is Heterosexual privilege?

Privilege is the overall unearned advantages and rights that systematically empowers certain groups over others. Heterosexual privileges are the benefits gained automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to homosexuals. It can also be the benefits an LGBQ person gains by claiming heterosexual identity and denying homosexual identity.

If you are heterosexual (or perceived as) these are a few benefits:

- o you can express affection (kissing, hugging, and holding hands) in most social situations and not expect hostile or violent reactions from others
- o you can legally marry the person whom you love in any state in the U.S.
- o you know that you will not be fired from a job or denied promotion because of your sexuality
- o you can raise, adopt, and teach children without people believing that you will molest them or force them into your sexuality
- o you can go wherever you want and know that you will not be harassed, beaten, or killed because of your sexuality

## How can I contribute to a Homophobia/Heterosexism free environment?

- **Be non-judgmental.** Sexual orientation and gender identity is not something to be judgemental of or ashamed about. Be supportive and open to listen to friends no matter what their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Remember that it is not possible to assume someone's sexual orientation based on what you perceive it to be.** Assuming that everyone is heterosexual "unless you know otherwise" or assuming someone who is "acting gay" is homosexual puts people into specific roles that create certain stereotypes about people. It can be hurtful to assume one's sexual orientation.
- **Engage in inclusive practices.** Create work, study and living environments in which gender and sexual diversity are included, modeled and valued.
- **Be mindful of the language you use with others.** One of the main ways heterosexism thrives is through language. Saying things such as "that shirt is gay" or "that guy throws like a girl" could be offensive to others. Use words that are gender inclusive like *partner* instead of wife, boyfriend, etc. Speak up against teasing, harassing, slurs, comments that you witness against those who do not fit in with gender roles or heterosexual characteristics. Silence condones and encourages such behaviors.
- **Educate yourself.** If there are things you don't know or understand about LGBTQ issues, do some research, ask questions or contact a group that deals with these issues.

## Why should people be informed about Heterosexism and Homophobia?

*Homophobia and Heterosexism contribute to a climate of fear, hate, and discrimination for everyone.* The attitudes that create Heterosexism and Homophobia also contribute to other kinds of discrimination like racism, sexism, ageism, etc. For example, Heterosexism is a weapon of sexism because it validates sexist practices and confines people to gender roles. Informing yourself of these issues can help you to make decisions that are inclusive and non-judgmental of others.

## Resources

### Books & Articles:

*Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price* by Warren J. Blumenfeld  
*The Invention of Heterosexuality* by Jonathan Ned Katz

**Recognizing heterosexism and homophobia:  
Creating an anti-heterosexist, homophobia-free  
campus**  
<http://www.mcgill.ca/queerequity/heterosexism/>

**Sexual Prejudice: Understanding Homophobia  
and Heterosexism**  
[http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/  
sexual\\_prejudice.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/sexual_prejudice.html)

### Community Resources

**Gender Equity Resource Center**  
**Cal Ally Workshop** (for LGBT Communities)  
Contact: [lgbtworkshops@aol.com](mailto:lgbtworkshops@aol.com) or  
Call: (510) 643-5728  
For a 60 or 90 minute workshop for your group  
<http://students.berkeley.edu/osl/genreq.asp>

**Communities United Against Violence**  
Shelter, support groups, legal advice for LGBT people,  
(415) 333-4357 – 24 Hour Crisis Hotline  
(415) 777-5500  
[www.cuav.org](http://www.cuav.org)

**Pacific Center** (Berkeley)  
(510) 548-8283  
2712 Telegraph Avenue  
[www.pacificcenter.org](http://www.pacificcenter.org)

### Female Sexuality or Male Sexuality Classes

Classes that focus on issues of sexuality. Class availability varies from semester to semester so make sure you look at the website.

[www.decal.org](http://www.decal.org) , [www.femsex.net](http://www.femsex.net)

**Queer Resource Center**  
305 Eshleman Hall  
(510) 642-UGAY  
<http://queer.berkeley.edu>

GenEq is a department within *Campus Life & Leadership*, <http://cll.berkeley.edu> Last updated 02/06/2008

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## EXAMPLES OF SUBTLE HOMOPHOBIA, HETEROSEXISM, AND SEXISM

1. Assume everyone you meet is probably heterosexual.
2. Never say or have trouble saying the words 'lesbian, gay, bisexual'.
3. Begin sentences with "I'm straight but ..."
4. Think homosexuality is just a phase, a lifestyle, a choice, a preference.
5. Use the terms lesbian, gay, or bisexual (hereafter collectively known as LesBiGay) as accusatory.
6. Keep your distance from LesBiGays for fear of being labeled one yourself.
7. Are outspoken about LesBiGay rights, but make sure everyone knows you are straight.
8. When you hear the words lesbian or gay you immediately think of SEX and that sexuality is being 'flaunted'. When you hear the words marriage, husband, or wife, you immediately think of LOVE or you don't even notice that sexuality is being declared.
9. Don't ask about your LesBiGay friends' lovers/partners although you regularly ask about the wife/girlfriend or husband/boyfriend when you run into a heterosexual friend.
10. Tell or laugh at a homophobic joke so you don't get called names or laughed at too.
11. Feel repulsed by stereotypical gay men and lesbians.
12. Don't confront a homophobic remark for fear of being identified as a LesBiGay yourself.
13. Kiss an old friend, but are afraid to shake hands with, hug, or kiss a LesBiGay friend.
14. Feel repulsed by public displays of affection between lesbians or gay men, but accept the same affectional displays between heterosexuals.
15. Assume that all lesbians are 'butch' and gay men are effeminate.
16. Feel that a lesbian is just a woman who can't find a good man.
17. Stereotype lesbians as 'man-haters', separatists, or radicals. Use those terms accusingly.
18. Wonder which one is the 'man' in a lesbian couple and which one is the 'woman' in a gay male couple.
19. Feel that LesBiGays are too outspoken about gay rights.
20. Fail to be supportive when your LesBiGay friend is sad about a quarrel or breakup.
21. Avoid mentioning to friends that you are involved with a women's organization because you are afraid they will think you are a lesbian.
22. Expect a lesbian to change her public identity or affectional habits or mode of dress to work on feminist issues.
23. Change your seat in a meeting because a LesBiGay person sits in the chair next to yours.
24. Think that if a LesBiGay touches you they are making sexual advances.
25. Look at a lesbian or a gay man and automatically think of their sexuality rather than seeing them as whole, complete persons.

## Fact and Information Sheet About:

# Some of The Effects of Homophobia

From: *Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price*, ed. Warren J. Blumenfeld  
(Boston: Beacon Press, 1992)

Within the numerous forms of oppression, members of the target group (sometimes called "minority") are oppressed, while on some level members of the dominant group are hurt. Although the effects of the oppression differ qualitatively for specific target and dominant groups, in the end everyone loses.

1. Homophobia locks all people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression.
2. Homophobic conditioning compromises the integrity of heterosexual people by pressuring them to treat others badly, actions contrary to their basic humanity.
3. Homophobia inhibits one's ability to form close, intimate relationships with members of one's own sex.
4. Homophobia generally restricts communication with a significant portion of the population and, more specifically, limits family relationships.
5. Societal homophobia prevents some lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from developing an authentic self-identity and adds to the pressure to marry, which in turn places undue stress and oftentimes trauma on themselves as well as their heterosexual spouses and their children.
6. Homophobia is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chances of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Young people, of all sexual identities, are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are "normal."
7. Homophobia combined with sexphobia (fear and repulsion of sex) results in the elimination of any discussion of the lifestyles and sexuality of sexual minorities as part of school-based sex education, keeping vital information from all students. Such a lack of information can kill people in the age of AIDS.
8. Homophobia can be used to stigmatize, silence and, on occasion, target people who are perceived or defined by others as gay, lesbian or bisexual but who are in actuality heterosexual.
9. Homophobia prevents heterosexuals from accepting the benefits and gifts offered by sexual minorities: theoretical insights, social and spiritual visions and options, contributions to the arts and culture, to religion, to family life, indeed to all facets of society.
10. Homophobia (along with racism, sexism, classism, sexphobia, etc.) inhibits a unified and effective governmental and societal response to AIDS.
11. Homophobia diverts energy from more constructive endeavors.
12. Homophobia inhibits appreciation of other types of diversity, making it unsafe for everyone because each person has unique traits not considered mainstream or dominant. Therefore, we are all diminished when any one of us is demeaned.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING A LGBT-AFFIRMATIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT<sup>7</sup>

- Object to and eliminate jokes and humor that put down or portray LGBT persons in stereotypical ways.
- Counter statements made about sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression that are not relevant to decisions or evaluations being made about faculty, staff, or students.
- Invite “out” professionals to conduct seminars and lectures in your classes and offices. Invite them for both LGBT topics and other topics of their expertise.
- Do not force LGBT persons to come out of the closet, nor to come out for them to others. The process of coming out is one of enlarging a series of concentric circles of those who know. Initially the process should be in control of the individual until (and if) they consider it public knowledge.
- Recruit and hire “out” gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender staff and faculty. View sexual orientation and gender identity as a positive form of diversity that is desired in a multicultural setting. Always question job applicants about their ability to work with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered faculty, staff, and students.
- Do not refer to LGBT issues to LGBT staff/faculty. Do not assume their only expertise is LGBT-related issues. Check with staff about their willingness to consult on LGBT issues with other staff members.
- Be sensitive to issues of oppression and appreciate the strength and struggle it takes to establish positive LGBT identity. Provide nurturing support to colleagues and students in all phases of that process.
- Be prepared. If you truly establish a safe and supportive environment, people that you never thought of will begin to share their personal lives and come out in varying degrees. Secretaries, maintenance personnel, former students, and professional colleagues will respond to the new atmosphere. Ten percent is a lot of people!!
- View the creation of this environment as a departmental or agency responsibility, not the responsibility of individual persons who happen to be LGBT. Always waiting for them to speak, challenge, or act adds an extra level of responsibility to people who are already dealing with oppression on many levels.

### RESPONDING TO ANTI-LGBT BIAS

Homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism manifest themselves in many different ways, from physical violence and verbal harassment to assumptions of heterosexuality and exclamations of “that’s so gay!” Different situations call for different responses, but all situations call for a calm, non-inflammatory response. Bullying back is never a good idea. Your role as an ally is to diffuse situations of anti-LGBT bias, educate others about why it is harmful and unacceptable, and to provide support to the person who has been targeted. Below are some ideas for dealing with anti-LGBT bias.

#### **Name It, Claim It, and Stop It!**

This technique is great in most situation where someone is being teased, name – called, or verbally bullied. It gives you an opportunity to spotlight the behavior, take a personal stand on it, and attempt to keep it from happening again.

Name It: When you witness bias, call the offending party on it by saying “That term is not cool,” or “Using words like that is hurtful and offensive.”

Claim It: Make it YOUR issue. Say, “I have people I care about who are LGBT, and I don’t like to hear those words.”

Stop It: Make a request for the behavior to stop by saying, “Please don’t use those words,” or “Cut it out, please”.

## Get Help

In situations where talking to the bully hasn’t stopped the harassment, or where you have a feeling the trouble will continue to escalate despite your intervention, get adult help immediately. Trust your instincts. Being an ally does not mean you should compromise your safety at any time.

Similarly, if you know repeated incidents of harassment are occurring despite intervention, report it to the HCC Police Department. Reporting harassment is not “tattling”. It’s taking a mature and proactive stance for the right of every student to feel safe.

## Give Emotional First Aid

Don’t get so caught up in addressing the bias that you forget the person who was being picked on. If you’ve diffused the situation, always be sure to ask the person if they’re all right, if there’s anything you can do to help, and if they’d like to talk further or take a short walk to cool off. Remind them that the behavior was not their fault by saying something like, “That person was being a jerk. They obviously have a problem, and it’s not you. You’re all right just the way you are.”

## Easy Does It

Some situations call for a lighter hand. If nobody is being bullied or harassed, and the comments being made seem to be the result of ignorance and not a desire to hurt, try to keep these tips in mind.

Use Humor: Some teasing is misguided, not vicious. Sometimes a little humor can help diffuse a situation that’s becoming tense. For example, if someone says something like, “That shirt she’s wearing is so gay,” you might respond by saying, “I didn’t realize shirts had sexual orientations.” This gives you a chance to point out the senselessness of homophobic language while keeping the mood light.

Don’t personalize: Homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism are the products of beliefs. So don’t take it personally when someone makes a misguided conversational remark or asks a question that makes you bristle. Instead, take a step back, and remember that there is a belief behind that comment or question. It’s up to you to challenge that belief – without losing your cool.

Ask: Many people use anti-LGBT slurs without giving thought to how hurtful they are. Sometimes a well-placed query can stop them in their tracks and make them consider the language they use. Ask, “What do you think an LGBT person would think of that comment?” to open up a dialogue.

## Remember Everyone's Rights

There is a difference between free speech that is the expression of a value or belief, and using words as weapons. Every student should be allowed to be who they are, and express opinions that speak to that end, so long as that speech is not depriving other students of their rights to obtain an equal education. So if a student respectfully states a belief ("I believe homosexuality is a sin"), you can certainly challenge that belief by opening up a debate, but you cannot tell them to stop it. Of course, beliefs can be used as fodder for harassment, (E.g., saying, "God hates you because you're a queer".) in which case you can request that the behavior stop. It's sometimes a subtle distinction, but an important one, as we must guard everybody's First Amendment rights, whether or not we agree with how they use them.

*Taken from GLSEN Safe Space*



## Tips for Responding to Homophobia

**Inform.** People making homophobic comments are often times working with inaccurate information. Recognize that some people will not want to hear something different than what they've known, but if you educate yourself in the issues you can at least be confident in being able to offer accurate information.

**Acknowledge them.** Don't dismiss what the other person says. If your goal is to have a dialogue, you need to acknowledge what the other person says. You don't have to agree, and can say that you don't, but recognize that he or she is speaking from his or her own beliefs and experiences.

**Acknowledge others.** Make a point of acknowledging other opinions. Point out that there are multiple beliefs on the issues and speak from personal experience.

**Ask questions.** Make sure you understand where the other person is coming from so you can approach the issue in the appropriate way.

**Be charming.** Getting angry or smug will not help anything. It is hard to fault someone for being polite and gracious.

**Find common ground.** Look for something you can both agree on. This offers a great starting point for discussion and forms a connection.

**Don't be a fixer.** You just aren't going to change some people's minds. Sometimes it's better to make your point and leave it at that. If nothing else, you can give the person something to think about and perhaps hit home for someone else in the group or nearby.

## ACTION STEPS TO BEING A TRANS ALLY<sup>8</sup>

The term “transgender” encompasses many different gender presentations and identities. Many people do not identify as “transgendered”, but still face discrimination based on their gender expression and for not conforming to traditional gender presentations.

Here are some steps to being an ally to trans people:

- 1) Don't make assumptions about a trans person's sexual orientation. Gender identity is different than sexual orientation. Being gay doesn't mean you're trans and being trans doesn't mean you're gay. Sexual orientation is about who we're attracted to. Gender identity is about how we see ourselves. Trans people can identify as gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual, or asexual.
- 2) If you don't know what pronouns to use, ask- politely and respectfully. Then use that pronoun and encourage others to do so also.
- 3) Confidentiality, Disclosure and “Outing.” Some trans people “pass” and some do not. Knowing a trans person's status is personal information and up to them to share with others. Gwen Araujo and Brandon Teena were both murdered when others revealed their trans status. Others routinely lose housing, jobs and friends. Do not casually share this information, or “gossip” about a person you know or think is trans.
- 4) Don't assume what path a trans person is on regarding surgery or hormones. Affirm the many ways all of us can and do transcend gender boundaries, including the choices some of us make to use medical technology to change our bodies. Some trans people wish to be recognized as their gender of choice without surgery or hormones; some need support and advocacy to get respectful medical care, hormones, and/or surgery.
- 5) Don't police public restrooms. Recognize that gender variant people may not match the signs on the restroom door—or your expectations! Encourage businesses and agencies to have unisex bathrooms, and offer to accompany a trans-person to the bathroom so they are less vulnerable.
- 6) Don't just add the “T” without doing work. “LGBT” is now commonplace to show support for queerness. To be an ally for Transpeople, Gays, Lesbians and Bisexual people need to examine their own gender stereotypes and transphobia and be willing to defend trans people and celebrate trans lives.
- 7) Listen to trans voices. The best way to be an ally is to listen to trans people themselves. Talk to trans people in your community; they are the experts on their own lives!

## “WHAT SHOULD I DO IF?” ANSWERS TO COMMON ALLY QUESTIONS<sup>9</sup>

### **How can I tell if someone I know is LGBT?**

Ultimately, the only way to know if a person identifies as LGBT is if that person tells you so. There are numerous stereotypes about people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, but any people who are LGBT don't fit those stereotypes. There are also people who fit the stereotypes who aren't LGBT. Assumptions on your part can be misguided. The important thing to remember is that there is a great possibility that someone you interact with on campus

is LGBT and to be sensitive to that no matter who the person is.

**What should I do if I think someone is LGBT, but they haven't told me?**

Again, remember that assumptions on your part may be inaccurate. The best approach is to create an atmosphere where that individual can feel comfortable coming to you. You can do this by making sure you are open and approachable, by giving them indications that you are comfortable with this topic and that you are supportive of LGBT concerns. If the person is already "out" to himself or herself, and they feel you are worthy of their trust, then they may tell you. If the person seems to be in conflict about something, it may or may not be their sexuality. In this case, it is best to simply make sure they know you are there if they need to talk. Remember, they may not have told you because they don't want you to know.

**How do I make myself more approachable to people who are LGBT?**

Demonstrate that you are comfortable with topics related to sexual orientation and that you are supportive of LGBT concerns. Be sensitive to the assumptions you make about people and try not to assume that everyone you interact with is heterosexual, that they have opposite-sex partners, etc. Try to use inclusive language; for example, avoid the use of pronouns that assume the sex of someone's partners or friends, or use inclusive examples that specifically use LGBT topics. Be a role model by letting others know that you don't appreciate homophobic jokes or remarks; when you hear these kinds of jokes or remarks, confront them. Make yourself knowledgeable about LGBT concerns by reading books or attending a meeting or activity sponsored by a LGBT organization.

**If someone wants advice on what to tell his/her roommate, friends, or family about being LGBT, how can I help?**

Remember that it must be the individual's decision when and to whom to come out. Don't tell the person to do one thing or another; he/she could hold you responsible if it doesn't go well. Do listen carefully, reflect back the concerns and feelings you hear expressed, and suggest available resources for support. Help the person think through the possible outcomes of coming out. Support the person's decision even if you don't agree with it, and ask about the outcome of any action taken.

**How should I respond to heterosexual friends or coworkers who express negative feelings about a person who is LGBT in our office, in my classroom, or in any group I am a part of?**

When such problems arise, it is most useful to discuss this with the people involved. Help them to see past the issue of "gayness" to the reality that they are talking about a person, not just a sexual orientation. Make sure that you have accurate information so that you may appropriately discuss stereotypes and misinformation that often underlie such negative reactions. Note the similarities between people who are LGBT and heterosexual people. Be clear with others that while they all have a right to their own beliefs and opinions, you do not appreciate anti-gay comments or discrimination. Remember that others may take their cues from you and if you are uncomfortable with, hostile to, or ignore the person who is LGBT, others may follow suit. Conversely, if you are friendly with the person who is LGBT and treat them with respect, others may do the same.

**What should I say to someone who is afraid of contracting AIDS from people who are LGBT?**

AIDS is not transmitted through ordinary social contact. It is necessary for everyone to be knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS. If a friend or coworker is afraid and uninformed, use this as an educational opportunity.

### **How can I support people who are LGBT without my own sexual orientation becoming an issue?**

Be aware that if you speak out about issues related to sexual orientation, some people may take this as an indication of your own sexual orientation. Take time in advance to think through how you feel about this. How do you feel about your own sexual identity? Are you comfortable with yourself? Regardless of your sexual orientation, a confidence in your own self-image will translate into a comfort that leaves you less vulnerable.

### **How should I respond to rumors that someone is LGBT?**

Let others know that the sexual orientation or gender identity of any individual is irrelevant unless that person wishes to share that information. If you can, address any myths or stereotypes that may be fueling such speculation. If a particular person continues to spread rumors, talk to that person individually.

### **How can I get others to think more open-mindedly about people who are LGBT?**

In short, be a role model for others by being open and visible in your support. Share your belief with others when appropriate. When LGBT topics come up, talk about them, don't just avoid them. Show that you are comfortable talking about these issues, and comfortable with people who are LGBT. Remember that part of your goal as an ally is to create bridges across difference in order to increase understanding. While you may be motivated to share your views with others, be careful of being self-righteous: others can't learn from you if they are turned off from listening to begin with. Of course, your views are more convincing if they are backed up by sound knowledge. Take the time to educate yourself so that you know what you are talking about.

### **How can I respond when someone tells a homophobic joke?**

Many people believe jokes are harmless, and get upset by what they perceive as "politically correct attitudes" when others are offended by inappropriate humor. Labeling a belief or attitude as "politically correct" is an indirect way of supporting the status quo and resisting change. Most people who tell jokes about any minority group have never thought about how those jokes perpetuate stereotypes, or how they teach and reinforce prejudice. Someone who tells jokes about people who are LGBT probably assumes everyone present is heterosexual, or at least that everyone shares their negative attitudes toward LGBT people. However, most people do not tell jokes to purposefully hurt or embarrass others, and will stop if they realize this is the effect. Responding assertively in these situations is difficult, but not responding at all sends a silent message of agreement. No response is the equivalent of condoning the telling of such jokes. It is important to remember that young people, particularly those questioning their own sexual identity, will watch to see who laughs at such jokes, and will internalize some of those messages. In some instances, the inappropriateness of the joke could be mentioned at the time. In other situations, the person could be taken aside afterwards. Try to communicate your concerns about the joke with respect.

### **How can I respond to homophobic attitudes?**

If you disagree with a negative statement someone makes about people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, the assertive thing to do is to say so. Again, silence communicates agreement. Remember what your goal is in responding: not to start an argument or foster hostility, but to attempt to increase understanding. Disagreement can be civil and respectful. Share your views without accusing or criticizing. You are simply presenting another way of thinking about the topic. You may need to be prepared for the kind of responses you might receive toward stating your beliefs. It can be difficult to speak out in support of people who are LGBT. You might be afraid that others will question your own sexual orientation, your morals,

your values, or that you will be ostracized in some way. It is easy to forget there might be positive effects of your speaking out as well. These positive effects may include providing the support needed from an LGBT friend or family member, promoting a genuine change in the person's attitudes, and gaining respect from others for standing up for your beliefs.

**How can I respond to people who object to LGBT people for religious reasons?**

Usually, there is no way to change the minds of people who base their negative beliefs about LGBT people on religious convictions. However, while respecting their right to believe as they wish, you can share some information with them. It can be useful to point out that identifying as Christian, Muslim, or another religion is not absolutely incompatible with having positive beliefs about LGBT people. For example, not all individual Christians, nor even all-Christian denominations, are uniform in their views about same-sex relationships. There is a great deal of diversity among the Christian community with regard to beliefs about LGBT people. Many religious scholars argue that the meanings of the Biblical passages and other religious texts, which are said to refer to LGBT people, are actually unclear. It is also important to point out that while individuals are entitled to their personal religious beliefs, the beliefs of some should not be used to deny people who are LGBT equal treatment under the law.

## Guidelines for Respectful Behavior

- Don't laugh at or tell offensive, anti-homosexual jokes
- Don't make fun of people who don't fit traditional gender stereotypes
- Don't verbally or physically harass people perceived as homosexual
- Don't be indifferent by passively accepting acts by others that demean people
- Don't ignore the topic of homosexuality
- Don't refer to GLBT individuals as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society by using such terms as "deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional," "diseased," "perverted," or "destructive"
  
- Avoid oppression through lack of action by recognizing homophobia in others and being uncomfortable but refusing to say anything – condoning with silence
- Avoid oppression by not participating in activities or programs because people might think you are gay or lesbian
- Avoid defamatory language such as "fag," "faggot," "dyke," "homo," "queen," "she-male," "he-she," "tranny," and similar epithets
- Avoid associating homosexuality with pedophilia, child sexual abuse, bestiality, or incest
  
- Assume that in any group GLBT individuals may be present – or may have family members and friends who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender
- Confront politely when approached with racially offensive or anti-homosexual jokes, slurs, use of demeaning terms and labels
- Mediate between people with differing opinions
  
- Use the term "sexual orientation" rather than "alternative lifestyle" or "sexual preference"
- Use terms such as "significant other" or "partner" rather than "girlfriend" or "boyfriend"
- Use "committed relationship" rather than "marriage"
- Be proactive to educate yourself about cultural diversity and GLBT issues.
- Recognize the efforts of others to confront inappropriate behaviors and effect change
- Encourage, reward, and support colleagues, students, and employees who are inclusive and respectful of differences among people
- Appreciate differences among individuals within groups

## HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Educate oneself regarding cultural diversity issues
- Support GLBT events, programs, and services
- Encourage non-discrimination departmental and institutional policies
- Assist in developing and publicizing GLBT and cultural diversity resources
- Inform students what they need to do if they feel harassed
- Avoid heterosexist language and assumptions
- Listen non-judgmentally, with respect
- Offer assistance, make appropriate referrals, and provide accurate information
- Provide confidentiality (within the limits of reported sexual harassment)

# **SECTION 3:**

# **LGBT DEVELOPMENT**

## WHY COME OUT? BENEFITS AND RISKS<sup>10</sup>

### Benefits of Coming Out

- Ability to live one's life honestly
- Building self-esteem by being honest about one's self
- Developing closer, more genuine relationships with friends and family
- Alleviating the stress of hiding one's identity
- Connecting with other people who are "lost"
- Being part of a community with others with whom you have something in common
- Helping to dispel myths and stereotypes by speaking about one's own experience & educating others
- Being a role model for others

### Risks of Coming Out

- Not everyone will be understanding or accepting
- Family, friends, or coworkers may be shocked, confused, or even hostile
- An individual may experience harassment or discrimination. It is important to know that discrimination based upon sexual orientation is still legal in the vast majority of the U.S. In most cases, there is no legal protection for people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual – they may be fired from their jobs, denied housing, or denied insurance.
- A person may be thrown out of their homes or lose financial support from their parents/guardians.

#### Feelings:

Scared  
Vulnerable  
Unsure  
Relieved  
Proud  
All of the above

#### Needs:

Acceptance  
Support  
Understanding  
Comfort  
Acknowledgement of their feelings  
Assurance that relationships won't be negatively affected

#### Fears:

- Rejection — loss of relationships with friends or family
- Being "outed" against their will or wishes
- Discrimination, harassment, or abuse
- Being ostracized from or disowned by their family
- Being thrown out of their house
- Being seen as sick, immoral, or perverted
- Loss of financial support
- Not being accepted in their religious community
- Losing their job
- Having their professional credibility questioned or undermined
- Physical violence

The way in which a person who is lesbian, gay, or bisexual chooses to come out to others often reflects how she or he feels about their sexual orientation. The more positive responses the person receives to their news, the more comfortable they will feel with their identity and the easier it will become for them to come out to others in the future. How you react can help them out of the closet — or keep them in.



# Coming Out

The term "coming out" refers to the life-long, on-going, never-ending, cyclical process of developing a positive identity as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender person. For some people, the first recognition that one is GLBT comes very early, during the preschool years. For others it comes during early or late adolescence; for others, it might not occur until middle age or older. Whenever the process begins, it is "renewed" every time a GLBT person meets someone new or encounters a new situation, as the question of revealing one's sexual orientation usually arises. The following are a few examples:

- ~ Do I tell my new employer my partner is the same sex?
- ~ Do I remain silent when colleagues are discussing plans for weekends or holidays?
- ~ What do I (a lesbian) tell my physician when asked about my birth control methods?
- ~ What do I (gay male) tell my residence hall roommate when he tries to match me up with a girl he knows?

## Stages or Phases of Coming Out

*The process of "coming out" is cyclical and does not typically occur in a linear fashion.*

- ◆ **Awareness:** becoming aware of persistent attraction to the same sex
- ◆ **Confusion, questioning:** experiencing dissonance between one's feelings and society's expectations and norms; experiencing guilt, depression, secrecy, and isolation
- ◆ **Coming out, acceptance:** defining oneself as GLBT and beginning to share this identity with at least a few other people, even in the face of possible rejection by family, friends, employees, etc
- ◆ **Integration:** committing to one's identity, increasing the sharing of one's identity with others, experiencing one's sexual orientation as only one part, although an important part, of one's total identity

What might gays/lesbians/bisexuals/ transgender individuals be afraid of?

- Rejection – loss of relationships
- Gossip
- Harassment/abuse
- Being thrown out of family
- Being thrown out of house
- Having their lover arrested
- Loss of financial support
- Losing their job
- Physical violence

How might someone feel after a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender person comes out to him or her?

- |                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| ☛ Scared                            | ☛ Supportive |
| ☛ Shocked                           | ☛ Flattered  |
| ☛ Disbelieving                      | ☛ Honored    |
| ☛ Uncomfortable                     | ☛ Angry      |
| ☛ Not sure what to say              | ☛ Disgusted  |
| ☛ Not sure what to do next          |              |
| ☛ Wondering why the person came out |              |

How might GLBT people feel about their coming out to someone?

- Scared
- Vulnerable
- Relieved
- Wondering how person will react
- Proud

Why might GLBT individuals want to come out to friends/relatives?

- ⇒ End of the "hiding game"
- ⇒ Feel closer to those people
- ⇒ Be able to be "whole" around them
- ⇒ Stop wasting energy by hiding all the time
- ⇒ Feel like they have integrity
- ⇒ To make statement that "gay is ok"

## WHEN SOMEONE IS COMING OUT TO YOU

- Don't assume in advance that you know what it means for her or him to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Every person's experience is different. They may not want you to necessarily do anything. They may just need someone to listen.
- Consider it an honor that they have trusted you with this very personal information. Thank them for trusting you.
- Clarify with them what level of confidentiality they expect from you. They may not want you tell anyone at all. They may be out to others and not be concerned with who finds out.
- The person is apt to have spent many hours in thoughtful preparation and shares the information with keen awareness of the possible risk.
- There is no way for the gay person to predict your reaction accurately. American society sends mixed messages regarding whether LGBT people should be accepted or despised. The person has no way of truly knowing in advance which of these messages you have most absorbed and how you will react to their disclosure of their sexual orientation. Be mindful of this and do what you can to be reassuring to the person.
- It is important to understand that the person has not changed. You may be shocked by their revelation, but remember this is still the same person as before. Don't let the shock lead you to view the person as suddenly different or bad. You now know that this person can love someone of the same gender completely—you have no reason to believe suddenly that this person is morally depraved or emotionally unbalanced.
- Don't ask questions that would have been considered rude within the relationship before this disclosure. This person has the same sensibilities as before. However, you may well need to do some "catching up."
- If you don't understand something or have questions, remember that people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual often are willing to help you understand their life experiences. If you find yourself reacting negatively, remember that your feelings may change. Try to leave the door open for future communication.

## MODELS OF LGBT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Most LGBT people go through a complicated process of identity development while coming to terms with who they are. Based upon research done on lesbians and gay men, Vivienne Cass,<sup>10</sup> Richard Troiden,<sup>11</sup> and Eli Coleman<sup>12</sup> each created models which have been used to explain the development of sexual identity. The identity development process may be similar for bisexual and transgendered people. These models may help you in your role as an ally by giving you a reference for understanding what an LGBT person may be going through. The Cass Model of LGBT Identity Development is one of the most popular sexual identity development theories. The following is a brief explanation of the stages of Cass's model.

**1. Identity Confusion** “Could I be gay?” Person is beginning to wonder if ‘gayness’ is personally relevant. Denial and confusion are experienced.

**Task:** Who am I? Accept, deny, reject.

**Possible Responses:** Will avoid information about lesbians and gays; inhibit behavior; deny gayness (“experimenting”, “an accident”, “just drunk”). Males: May keep emotional involvement separate from sexual contact. Females: May have deep relationships that are nonsexual, though strongly emotional.

**Possible Needs:** Explore internal positive and negative judgments. Be permitted to be uncertain regarding sexual identity. May find support in knowing that sexual behavior occurs along a spectrum. Receive permission and encouragement to explore sexual identity as a normal experience (like career identity and social identity).

**2. Identity Comparison** “Maybe this does apply to me.” Will accept the possibility that she or he may be gay. Self-alienation becomes isolation.

**Task:** Deal with social alienation.

**Possible Responses:** May begin to grieve for losses and the things she or he will give up by embracing their same-sex sexual orientation. May compartmentalize his/her own sexuality. Accepts lesbian/ gay definition of behavior but maintains “heterosexual” identity of self. Tells oneself: “It’s only temporary; I’m just in love with this particular woman/man.”

**Possible Needs:** Will be very important that the person develops own definitions. Will need information about sexual identity, LGBT community resources, and encouragement to talk about loss of heterosexual life expectations. May be permitted to keep some “heterosexual” identity (it is not an all or nothing issue).

**3. Identity Tolerance** “I’m not the only one.” Accepts the probability of being gay and recognizes sexual, social, emotional needs that go with being LGBT. Increased commitment to sexual identity.

**Task:** Decrease social alienation by seeking out other lesbians and gay men.

**Possible Responses:** Beginning to have language to talk and think about the issue. Recognition that being lesbian or gay does not preclude other options. Accentuates difference between self and heterosexuals. Seeks out lesbian and gay culture (positive contact leads to more positive sense of self; negative contact leads to devaluation of the culture and stops growth). May try out variety of stereotypical roles.

**Possible Needs:** Be supported in exploring own shame feelings derived from heterosexism. Support in finding positive lesbian and gay community connections. It is particularly important for the Safe Zone Ally to be familiar with community resources.

**4. Identity Acceptance** “I will be okay.” Accepts, rather than tolerates, gay or lesbian self-image. There is continuing and increased contact with the gay and lesbian culture.

**Task:** Deal with inner tension of no longer subscribing to society’s norm, attempt to bring

congruence between private and public view of self.

**Possible Responses:** Accepts gay or lesbian identity. May compartmentalize “gay life.” Maintains less and less contact with heterosexual community. Attempts to “fit in” and “not make waves” within the gay and lesbian community. Begins some selective disclosures of sexual identity. More social coming out; more comfortable being seen with groups of men or women that are identified as “gay.” More realistic evaluation of situation.

**Possible Needs:** Continue exploring grief and loss of heterosexual life expectations. Continue exploring internalized “homophobia” (learned shame from heterosexist society). Find support in making decisions about where, when, and to whom he or she self-discloses.

**5. Identity Pride** “I’ve got to let people know who I am!” Immerses self in LGBT culture. Less and less involvement with heterosexual community. Us vs. Them quality to political/social viewpoint.

**Task:** Deal with incongruent views of heterosexuals.

**Possible Responses:** Splits world into “gay” (good) and “straight” (bad). Experiences disclosure crises with heterosexuals, as he or she is less willing to “blend in”. Identifies gay culture as sole source of support; all gay friends, business connections, social connections.

**Possible Needs:** Support for exploring anger issues. Support for exploring issues of heterosexism. Develop skills for coping with reactions and responses to disclosure of sexual identity. When working with students in this stage, resist being defensive! It is a normal part of their development. Do not rush or advise them to “tone it down.”

**6. Identity Synthesis** Develops holistic view of self. Defines self in a more complete fashion, not just in terms of sexual orientation.

**Task:** Integrate LGBT identity so that instead of it being the whole identity, it is one aspect of self.

**Possible Responses:** Continues to be angry at heterosexism, but with decreased intensity. Allows trust of others to increase and build. Gay and lesbian identity is integrated with all aspects of “self.” Feels alright to move out into the community and not simply define space according to sexual orientation.

Please use the following links to learn more about Troiden and Coleman’s models of sexual identity development respectively:

[http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/developmental\\_psychology,3.html](http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/developmental_psychology,3.html)

[http://pflag-olympia.org/five\\_stages.html](http://pflag-olympia.org/five_stages.html)

## **SPECIAL ISSUES FOR LGBT STUDENTS<sup>11</sup>**

### **Self Esteem and Identity**

- Students face normal developmental tasks of developing identity with the additional stress of forging a positive gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or a transgender identity.
- Self-esteem is affected by attempting to identify with a lifestyle that many view as disgusting, immoral, abnormal, or immature.

- Many students face this struggle without support of friends or family, fearing rejection if the “come out.”
- “Passing” as heterosexual may lower self-esteem.

### Religion and Spirituality

- College is a time for questioning and exploring the role of religion in one’s life.
- Many religious and spiritual traditions prohibit or sanction homosexual and transgender feelings or behavior.
- It is important to remember that many LGBT students are deeply religious and spiritual and to be careful not to undermine their feelings and values of faith

### Relationships and Intimacy

- LGBT students have a more difficult time identifying potential romantic partners due to fears of being “out.”
- LGBT students lack the institutional support for the development of relationships (e.g., school sponsored dances and social events, fraternity/sorority functions, etc.).
- Relationships are under more stress because they are often hidden, and the persons involved may be at different points in their identity development as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or transgendered person.

### Academic and Career Issues

- Academic progress can be affected by the stress and social isolation often experienced by LGBT students.
- Societal attitudes sometimes limit career choices for LGBT students who want to be open about their lifestyle in the workplace (e.g., school teachers).
- Geographic considerations may be more important to LGBT students who need or would like to be near an established LGBT community.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR BISEXUALS

The stigma attached to bisexuality in many ways is greater than the stigma against gays, lesbians, and transgender people. Many bisexuals are open about their identity. Many others hide it from both the heterosexual and homosexual worlds, afraid that neither will accept them. Although many bisexuals align themselves with gay, lesbian, and transgendered people, an individual’s self-identification as bisexual is frequently met with skepticism in the respective communities and may be seen as an attempt to avoid stigma. There is an added pressure by the gay and lesbian communities on bisexuals to “pick one” and behave in a sexually exclusive manner. On the other hand, heterosexuals pressure bisexuals to “get over it” and “come back” to practicing exclusive opposite-gender sex and relationships. Be sensitive to the unique position of a bisexual person and work to avoid adding to the pressure being placed on that person to align with societal expectations.

# Bisexuality: Myths and Reality

As the Kinsey and Klein scales demonstrate, sexuality runs along a continuum. It is not static but rather has the potential to change throughout one's lifetime, and it varies infinitely among people. We cannot fit our sexuality into nice neat categories, which determine who and what we are. Bisexuality exists at many points along the sexual continuum. The following addressed many common myths about bisexuality

## Myth

- People who consider themselves bisexual are just confused or going through a phase. They'll settle down and realize they're actually homosexual or heterosexual.
- People who consider themselves bisexual are really heterosexual, but are experimenting.
- People who consider themselves bisexual are actually lesbian/gay, but haven't fully accepted themselves and finished coming out of the closet.
- Bisexuals are shallow and narcissistic and are promiscuous swingers who are attracted to every woman and man they meet.
- Bisexuals get the best of both worlds and a doubled chance for a date on Saturday night.
- Bisexuals are desperately unhappy, endlessly seeking some kind of peace which they cannot ever find.
- Bisexuals are responsible for spreading AIDS into the heterosexual community.

## Reality

- Some people go through a transitional period of identifying as bisexual before coming out as lesbian or gay. Others may explore same-sex attraction and relationships and then assume a heterosexual identity. For others, bisexuality remains a long-term orientation. For some bisexual people, same-sex attractions were a transitional phase to coming out as bisexual.
- Whether an individual is an "experimenting heterosexual" or a bisexual depends on how one defines him or herself.
- Bisexuality is a legitimate sexual orientation. Many bisexuals are completely out of the closet as bisexuals, while others continue to hide their identity.
- The "sex" in bisexuality gets overemphasized. Bisexual people have a range of sexual behaviors like all other sexualities. Our culture projects onto bisexuals its fascination with and condemnation of sex and pleasure. In reality, bisexuals are just like everyone else.
- Combine our society's extreme heterosexism and homophobia with lesbian and gay hesitance to accept bisexuals into their community, and it might be more accurate to say that bisexuals get the worst of both worlds.
- Like lesbians and gays who have been told that they will live awful lives, bisexuals often respond that much of the pain they experience comes from oppression.
- AIDS can be spread by anyone, to anyone if safe sex is not practiced. Bisexuality is not the problem behind the spread of AIDS, unsafe sex is.

## MULTICULTURAL LGBT IDENTITY

For many people their status as a member of the LGBT community comes into conflict with the values and traditions of their cultural background. It is common for these people to feel as if they must choose between their identities, for only one part of their identity can be important. It is difficult for many to strike a balance which allows them to be empowered and liberated in both identities. Beliefs regarding homosexuality, bisexuality, and gender identity or expression vary amongst cultures, thus the experience for each person will be different. However, there are some commonalities amongst people struggling with these challenges:

- They feel like they don't know who they are.
- They don't know which part of their identity is more important.
- They don't know how to deal with one identity oppressing another within themselves.
- They don't have anyone to talk to about their split identity,
- They feel misunderstood by each group if they consider both parts equally important.

# **GLBT International University Population**

## **Issues Faced by International Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students in the US**

The following stories and information are taken from an article written by Nadine Kato, International Student Advisor in the Office of International Students and Scholars at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The author's article is based on her research conducted for a master's degree in Intercultural and International Management from the School of International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont.

### **Fear of Returning to a Less GLB-Friendly Home Country**

A Japanese man says that coming out to his parents is the biggest issue he will face when he returns home. He believes that people, including his parents, will accept his sexual orientation better if he "compensates" for being gay by excelling in some other way, such as by getting an additional degree, gaining fluency in English, or becoming famous.

A student from Honduras describes his disappointment in his home country in this way: I came out after I graduated from undergrad and returned to Honduras a couple of months later. Moving back crushed the resulting elation from coming out. I felt dirty and shameful. The culture at large saw me as a diseased, sick, perverted individual. I was crushed. I never want to go back to that.... Indeed, I reject my entire cultural identity as a Honduran. I never again want to be a part of it.

Hilda Besner and Charlotte Spungin, authors of *Gay and Lesbian Students: Understanding Their Needs*, say that "identity disclosure for most gays and lesbians brings with it a tremendous amount of personal freedom and a more complete integration of their sexual identity and their environment." The Honduran student had just recently come out and experienced a sense of personal freedom in the United States. His return home made him feel isolated and ashamed.

A man from Venezuela describes his feelings about being GLB in his home country: Being GLB in Venezuela is something so horrible that I didn't have an idea of what to do. I prayed, exercised, and tried to remain as busy as possible. Nevertheless I constantly would have to hear offensive comments about GLB people in general.... There is some kind of national obsession with trying to find out if a man is gay or not, but if somebody acknowledges that they are gay, then people react with an "I don't want to know about that." Also many men engage ... in active homosexual sex but don't consider themselves homosexuals.... I am glad and thank God that I was able to get out of that country because I feel that I have done nothing wrong and nevertheless I would be treated like a crook in my country.... I will never go back; I think poorly of the people in my country and don't want to go there ever again. I will not be humiliated....

### **Difficulty Staying in the United States to Be with a Partner**

I'm presently involved with someone I met [as an] undergraduate, when I came out. We came out together and we are still together. I'm faced with having to go back to my country because I'm running out of visa options. I wish there were a way to marry or some partnership options to be able to stay together. (Colombian man, graduate student)



The most significant issue for my partner and me...has been and continues to be the fact that our relationship cannot be legally sanctioned and that, therefore, we never know if I will be able to stay in the United States. This continuous "deadline," i.e., visa expiration date, is frequently a topic of discussion and is, at times, a significant stress factor. (Dutch woman, graduate student)

#### **Other Unique Issues Facing International GLB Students**

International GLB students face other issues as well. As the world becomes smaller, particularly with the advent of e-mail, the threat of having one's personal life become public knowledge back home can be a source of acute anxiety. A woman from Bermuda, an island of just 60,000 people, fears that if she comes out in the United States, word will get back to her home country, and she will not be able to get a job when she returns. A Danish student also tells of a gay friend from Bangladesh who was afraid that students from his home country would discover he was gay and leak the news to his family. Although some may wonder how realistic such fears are, a poignant case has been documented by an Indian woman in *Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience*. The author's first "mature" lesbian love affair occurred while she was studying in the United States, but news traveled from the United States back to her father in India. (Ratti 1993)

International students who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual have a number of unique issues that may surface during their time in the United States. Informed faculty and staff are in an excellent position to support these students and help them deal with their concerns. Let students know they are welcome to discuss personal issues with you, and refer them to other resources when appropriate.

#### **Specific Sources of Support**

Most respondents identify close friends as the most supportive resource. Many also seek GLB communities and resources off campus, such as GLB bookstores, dance clubs, coffeehouses and bars, political action groups, and support groups. Other sources of support include GLB campus organizations, celebrity role models such as Martina Navratilova, movie stars, rock stars, television personalities, poets, authors, clergy, counselors, and gay pride parades. Some have found that a particular class played a pivotal role in their development. A small handful have found support in a professor, the campus women's center, family members, partners, books, or a GLB campus religious group. Four respondents, three of whom are Asian, find that the GLB presence on the Internet "provides a tremendous degree of information to GLB persons in developing and accepting their sexuality."

Kato, Nadine, 1998. Working with Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual International Students in the United State. NAFSA: Association of Intentional Educators. *International Educator*, Vol. VIII, No. 1.

Ratti, Rakesh, 1993. *Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience*. Boston: Alyson Publications.

Intersexed people do not neatly fall into the constructed biological categories of male or female. When intersexed individuals are born, often doctors cannot easily identify them as “male/boy” or “female/girl” and scramble to “fix the problem”, usually through painful surgeries that greatly compromise sexual function and well-being. Intersexed people are sometimes referred to as “hermaphrodites” which is a clinical term and label that is considered archaic and demeaning. Despite popular belief, intersexuality is relatively common in about one out of every one five hundred to one thousand births. There is a lot of secrecy and shame in medical communities and families regarding intersexed people. Many families do not openly discuss the subject, and some individuals and/or their parents are not even aware that their bodies were altered while in infancy or young childhood. In fact, there are several intersexed people who attend this school that you are probably not even aware about.

The following are personal experiences of intersexed individuals and their loved ones. When reading these experiences please open your hearts and minds with compassion.

*Cheryl Chase, activist: “Until the age of 18 months, Cheryl Chase was known as Brian. She was born in the late 1950s and diagnosed as a ‘hermaphrodite’, which meant that her genitals were ‘ambiguous’. Such ambiguity was not acceptable to her doctors, so they decided that she would be ‘assigned’ a female. They performed a clitorrectomy, and her parents began raising her as a girl. Chase explains: ‘There was no concern about sexual function, and no male doctor could fathom a man with such a small penis.’. Chase didn’t learn about her past until she was a young adult, because her parents were instructed to get rid of anything that suggested her male potential, like boyish clothing, photographs, and toys. The family even relocated. They were also told to never, ever discuss it with their new daughter. As a child, all Chase knew was that she wasn’t happy. She ran away from kindergarten and hated wearing dresses. ‘I knew I wasn’t like other girls, and I wasn’t going to marry a boy’, she recalls. ‘I was romantically attracted to women.’ Her pubescent revelation of her penchant for women was accompanied by recurring violent nightmares in which she was chased by killers. When trying to choose an escape route in those dreams, she didn’t know whether to slip into the public men’s or women’s room. All the while, her abdominal organs were falling out between her legs. Chase suffered in painful silence for years until she finally began gathering her medical records to determine how her past had shaped her future. Over the years Chase read histories of the gay and lesbian civil rights movement, and in 1992 mustered the courage to come out as intersexed. She realized she had to start advocating for other intersexed individuals to raise awareness and create camaraderie. ‘I always thought there was no one like me in the world’, she explains. She created the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) to not only develop an intersex community but, more importantly, because, ‘the sorts of things that my parents and doctors did to me were horrific. And they’re still doing these mutilating surgeries on people and they still tell parents it’s necessary, safe and the child will never have a normal life without it.’” [1].*

*Anonymous, parent of intersexed child: “When his child was born just over 20 years ago, his first question like most new fathers, was, ‘is it a boy or a girl?’. The doctor ignored him. He asked again, and this time the doctor responded, ‘I don’t know’. He called his mother to share his news, and when she asked if it was a boy or a girl, his response freaked her out mostly because she didn’t know what she was going to tell her friends when they asked the child’s sex. That’s when his newborn’s genitals began to weigh heavily on his mind. ‘To me it looked like a penis,’ he recalls. ‘To the doctors it was a*

clitoris, and they said 'you should probably have surgery right away, then you can say yes, you had a girl and get on with your life.' He asked to speak with other parents who had made the same decision, but got no response. He asked to speak with other parents who had dealt with this issue. No names were forthcoming. So, with fear of losing a child as their motivation, he and his wife consented to the sex-assignment surgery when their baby was just three weeks old. 'When they brought her back from surgery I was wild,' he says. 'She was sobbing and shaking uncontrollably. It was clear she was traumatized and I thought 'Oh, my God, what have I done?!''. What was most disturbing to him was the doctor's pride at his own handiwork. 'Here I was devastated by how pathetic and upset my child was, and the surgeon comes in, pulls a piece of gauze out of the vaginal canal, slaps me on the back and tells me what a magnificent job he's done. He might as well have been talking about a pizza or a great suit.'" [1].

Lynell Stephanie Long, African-American Intersex activist: " I was born at 11:45pm on June 11th, at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. After 14 hours of labor and massive blood loss I was born breech, and with ambiguous genitalia. My life during high school was sickening. I was teased daily because I looked very androgynous, and no one knew if I was a boy or girl unless they asked me. When asked I said I did not know for sure. When my mother overheard me saying that at the age of 15 she whipped me and told me I was an embarrassment to her.

I attended college after high school, even though I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life – besides die. Being hospitalized for over a week every summer gave me the notion that maybe I should be a doctor, but I wasn't smart enough. So I settled on being a medical assistant. I did have a genuine passion for working in the medical profession, I wanted to save children from the horror I received from the multiple tests, and examinations. I didn't want any children to feel the shame of having resident student doctors pile in your room and be lectured by a doctor while he lifted my gown, and pretended I wasn't there.

The most horrible experience I remember is laying in bed with IV's in both arms, having my doctor and at least fifteen student doctors stare at my genitals, and leaving without pulling down my hospital gown. I laid there exposed for over an hour until the nurse finally came in to change the IV bag. At the age of 29 I married a girl I met in college. I married because I was told that's what was expected of me. Needless to say, the marriage didn't last long.

After that I spent years and years abusing drugs and alcohol. I did everything I could to kill myself, but nothing worked. Eventually I got addicted to crack cocaine, and went into the rehab. Getting sober and drug-free was the best choice "I" made regarding my life.

It wasn't until I got sick in 1997 that I found out that I was Intersex. My endocrinologist asked a lot of questions, particularly about the scar that runs from the tip of my penis to my anus. I needed to trust someone; I knew I was going to try to kill myself again unless I was able to be the woman I am. I told him my story, and he listened. Today I love me the way I am, and my girlfriend loves me as well. Someone once said, if you love yourself that good, if someone else loves you as well that's great. It's great because there are people that are opening their mind and learning more about Intersex conditions. After appearing on the Montel Williams show twice, and after receiving a lot of fan mail, I'm convinced that one day people will accept that there is a third gender, Intersex." [2]

S. Asher Hanley, gay intersexed person: "I, like one out of every 500 infants, was born intersexed. This means I'm neither here nor there, biologically speaking—I don't fit

*neatly into one of the expected options ("male" or "female"). Every day, on campus and off, I pass for the average queer (if there is such a thing). I am capable of passing until someone finds out what I am underneath my clothes, and then, once again, I become an outsider. This has defined my existence for so long that it is easy for me to forget I can be accepted at all. I am generally open with anyone who asks me whether I'm male or female (and you'd be surprised how many people will ask). I am glad that people ask and usually answer them honestly, as long as it seems safe to discuss. If it doesn't seem safe, I just say, "I'm a boy. I just reached puberty late." In a way I have been blessed with having an intersexed life. Not to say my biology makes me any more free of these gendered expectations—it doesn't. My biology only makes it clear that, at a more basic level, it makes as little sense to define only two sexes as it does to define only two genders. I believe I am, for better or for worse, living proof that human beings are far more complicated than that." [3].*

Intersexed individuals should not have to face secrecy, shame, disrespect, or cruelty in their lives. We can all help by educating ourselves about intersexuality and the experiences of intersexed people. Below is a short list of resources about this topic. It is important to recognize and understand that people who are intersexed are not "mistakes" or "monsters," but are human beings who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

*(Written by Jesse Pack, '03)*

#### Intersex Resources:

Intersex Society of North America (ISNA): <http://www.isna.org>. An excellent organization that has outreach, books, films, and articles about intersexuality that can be ordered or read online.

The UK Intersex Association: <http://www.ukia.co.uk/>. Another organization with lots of information online, even though it is based in the United Kingdom.

Introduction to Intersex Activism: <http://www.survivorproject.org/is-intro.html>. Good basic resource put out by the Survivor Project.

Human Rights for Intersexuals: <http://www.luckymojo.com/tkintersex.html>. An excellent article about the recent movement for the civil rights of intersexed people.

#### Inside Intersexuality:

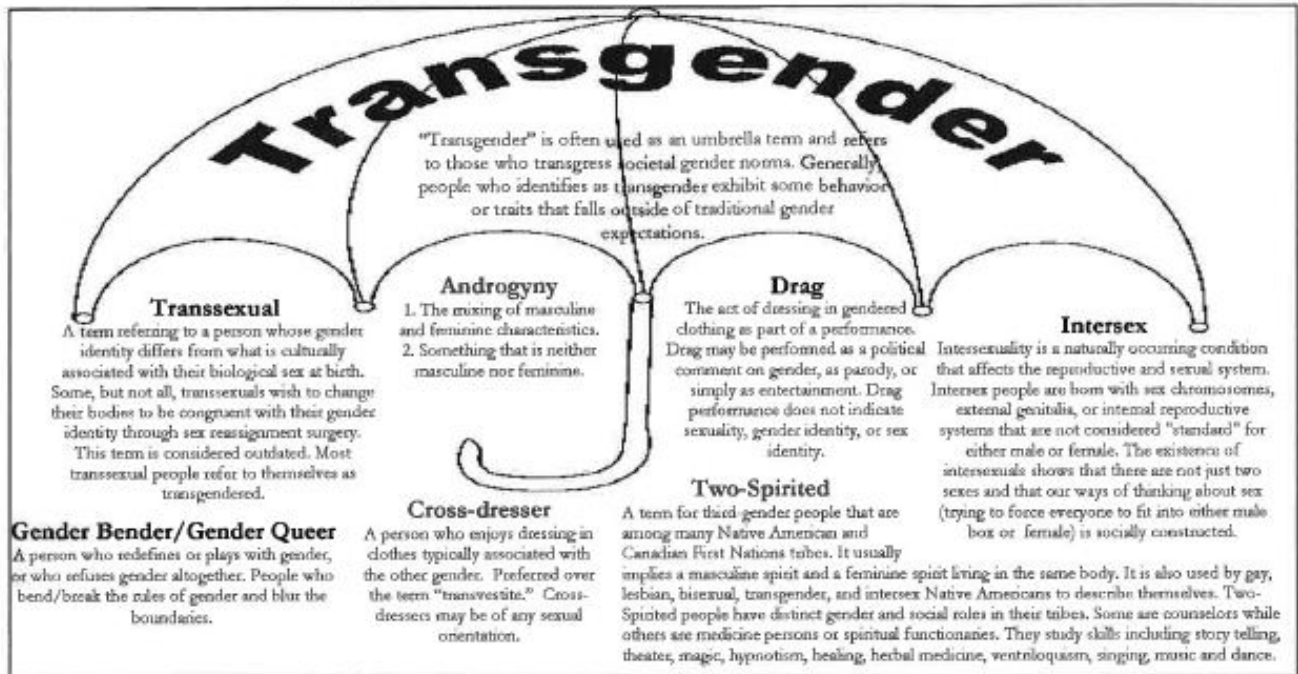
<http://www.healthyplace.com/Communities/Gender/intersexuals/index.html>. A good sight for information and resources.

Intersex People: <http://www.itpeople.org/frameset.html>. Good sight full of information and articles that can be read online.

#### Works Cited:

1. Stakin, Stacy. "Neither, Nor; Either, Or: The Intersex Question". *Pride.02: Profile Pursuit, Inc.*: New York, 2002.
2. Long, Lynell Stephani. "My Story: Hermaphro-DYKE". <http://mypages.blackvoices.com/intersex/aboutus/>; copyright, 1999.

## Transgender Umbrella: Useful Terms\*



### In's and Out's of Gender\*\*

- **Gender:** A socially constructed collection of traits, behaviors, and meanings that we use as a standard for how biological differences should be represented.
- **Gender Conformity:** When your gender identity and sex "match" (i.e. fit social norms). For example, a male who identifies and behaves in traditionally masculine ways and identifies as a man.
- **Gender Expression:** Outward behaviors and appearances (e.g. hair, clothing, voice, body language) by which people manifest their gender identity or gender choices.
- **Gender Identity:** A person's fundamental sense of their own gender. This can include identifying as a combination of genders or refusing to label oneself with a gender. Gender identity is often confused with or considered tied to sexual orientation, but this is inaccurate. Gender identity and sexual orientation are exclusive off each other.
- **Gender Roles:** Are the socially constructed and culturally specific norms of behavior and appearance expectations imposed based on biological sex (i.e. femininity and masculinity).
- **Sex Identity:** The sex that a person sees him- or herself as. This can include refusing to label oneself.

\* Adapted from design by Kerry John Poynter (TGNNet Arizona, Goodrum, A.J., no date)

\*\* Adapted from the online encyclopedia Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>.

## FAQ: TRANSGENDER ISSUES<sup>12</sup>

### What is Gender Identity?

Gender identity is a complex concept to define. In our Western view of the body, there are only two genders: masculine and feminine. Similarly, according to the Western construct, there are only two genital/birth sexes: male and female. Although, many people use the terms gender and sex interchangeably, it is important to note that these words actually refer to separate, distinct aspects of our being.

The term ‘sex’ refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women (<http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/index.html>). Such characteristics include sex chromosomes (XX = female, XY = male), hormone levels, and internal and external genitalia. ‘Gender’, on the other hand, refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (<http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/index.html>). For example, in American mainstream culture the color pink, being nurturing, and wearing dresses are associated with girls/women. Boys/men are associated with the color blue, being dominant or aggressive, and wearing pants.

Most people are comfortable aligning their gender with their sex. However, for some these two aspects of their being can come into conflict. Thus, ‘gender identity’ is a person’s internal self-awareness of being male or female (<http://www.pflagcolumbus.org/educationtg.htm>). Additionally, one’s gender identity is closely related to ‘gender expression’, the physical manifestation of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through clothing, mannerisms, and chosen names. For Transgender people their gender expression usually matches their gender identity, rather than their birth sex (<http://lesbianlife.about.com/od/trans/g/GenderExpressio.htm>).

It is important to remember that there are many non-Western cultures with constructions of gender that include three or more gender identities. For example, the Tewa Indians of New Mexico identify as women, men, and ‘*kwido*’, although their New Mexico birth records recognize only females and males. The *Hijras* of India and Samoan *fa’afafine*, biological males who dress and behave like women, are additional examples of accepted third genders (<http://hubpages.com/hub/What-is-Your-Gender-Identity>).

### What Causes a Person to Have a Particular Gender Identity?

Though there are many theories, no research has been produced yet that confirms any particular cause. These theories include genetics, hormonal effects during fetal development, changes in brain structure, social influences, and evolutionary factors. Like most things, gender identity is most likely defined through a collection of complex interactions between many variables. Some even believe that the most important of these variables are emotional, psychological, or spiritual rather than physical (<http://www.pflagcolumbus.org/educationtg.htm>).

### Is Gender Identity a Choice?

No one can choose their Gender Identity. It is an inherent part of your being. Gender Identity and expression begins to emerge as early as age 3. It is not uncommon for a transgender person to express that they “knew” from a very early age. And though we can choose on how we cope with our gender identity and even try to ignore it and live contrary to it, no one can choose their gender identity (<http://www.pflagcolumbus.org/educationtg.htm>).

## What is the Transgender, Transsexual, and Gender Community?

The 'Gender Community' is made up of transsexuals, transgender people, cross-dressers, and all others whose gender identity does not fall in line with the Western dichotomous view of gender (*i.e.*, including only male and female).

**Transsexuals** are people who believe that they are psychologically akin to the opposite gender and feel trapped in their biological sex. A transsexual may seek medical help to surgically change the genitals and other aspects of their appearance to match the deeply felt internal gender identity (<http://www.ifsha.org/glossary.htm>). Hormone therapy is also commonly used to non-surgically alter their bodies. Transsexuals are often referred to as *post-op* (have had the operation and are on hormones), *pre-op* (plan to have the operation and are on hormones), *non-op* (do not plan to have the operation and are on hormones). In all cases, the individuals live the lifestyle of the self-perceived gender. Transsexuals are included under the umbrella term 'transgender', however not all transgender persons are transsexual (<http://civilliberty.about.com/od/gendersexuality/g/transgender.htm>).

**Transgender** is an umbrella term for people who believe that their biological sex does not match their assigned gender (<http://equalitydiversityservices.co.uk/jargon-buster/>). A transgender person is *anyone* who fully accepts a gender identity: androgynous, hermaphroditic, intersex, transsexual, third gender, bigender, or otherwise gender non-conformist which does not match his or her gender as assigned by their sex (<http://civilliberty.about.com/od/gendersexuality/g/transgender.htm>). Transgender people may or may not use hormonal medications or surgery to alter their bodies.

**Cross dressers** "cultivate the appearance" of the opposite sex, particularly with regard to clothing. Cross-dressing may be undertaken on a part-time or recreational basis, such as at clubs and social events, and may or may not have erotic significance. **Transvestites** use the cross-dressing as a type of fetish (sexual arousal), but do not see themselves as the other gender or other sex.

## Can Therapy Change Gender Identity?

There are numerous research studies and clinical results showing that gender identity is fixed at a very young age (between 2 – 4 years old). Due to religious, family, or societal influence, some transgender individuals do seek therapy in an attempt to change their gender identity. However, the studies and campaigns suggesting that such therapy can change LGBT people are based on ideological biases rather than peer-reviewed, solid science. There are no studies that show proven long-term changes in gay or transgender people, and many reported changes are based solely on behavior, not a person's actual self-identity. The American Psychological Association has stated that scientific evidence shows that reparative therapy (therapy which claims to change LGBT people) does not work and can do more harm than good ([http://www.pflag-palatine.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=60:cangaypeoplechange&catid=52:parentsfamilyandfriends&Itemid=71](http://www.pflag-palatine.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=60:cangaypeoplechange&catid=52:parentsfamilyandfriends&Itemid=71)).

## What about So-Called Conversion Therapies?

Just as has happened in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) communities, there are therapists targeting the Transgender (T-community) for "conversion therapies". These therapists claim to be able to change their clients' gender identity and cure the "disorder" the clients suffer from. Closer analysis of these therapists' methods shows several factors that cast doubt on their claims. For example, many of the claims come from organizations with an ideological perspective that is anti-GLBTI (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex). Furthermore, there is minimal to no documentation of their claims.

Recently (2009), “the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation conducted a systematic review of the peer-reviewed journal literature on sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) and concluded that efforts to change sexual orientation are unlikely to be successful and involve some risk of harm, contrary to the claims of SOCE practitioners and advocates”. Harm caused by such therapies included “loss of sexual feeling, depression, suicidality, and anxiety”. Those participants who did report positive experiences indicated that they felt a reduction in isolation, alterations in how problems were viewed, and a sense of community through their religious affiliation. However, these effects are not unique to SOCEs and can be gained from a general mutual support group (<http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/publications/therapeutic-response.pdf>). For more information about the LGBT Discussion Group provided at HCC please contact IISS or Counseling Services.

Although sexual orientation and gender identity are separate concepts, current research studies do not adequately distinguish between the two. Therefore, these studies, results, and the APA’s conclusions hold true for therapies designed to change gender identity as well.

### **Is Gender Identity Dysphoria a Mental Illness or an Emotional Problem?**

While Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID) is listed in the diagnostic manual of mental health, there are a number of organizations that are lobbying for its removal in the same fashion that homosexuality was removed from the manual many years ago. Many psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, nurses, and social workers agree that transgender is not an illness, a mental disorder, or an emotional problem. More and more international, objective, scientific research is showing that transgender and transsexuality are not, in and of themselves, associated with mental disorders or emotional problems. For more details see the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association web page at <http://www.hbgida.org>

### **What is Intersex?**

The ancient Greeks recognized a “third sex”, which they called hermaphrodite. This term, now considered insulting, refers to an individual who displays both male and female sexual organs at birth. The anatomical presentation can be quite varied and does not necessarily require that both complete organs be displayed, hence an abstract “continuum” of sex. The preferred current terminology is “intersexed.” The prevalence of intersexuality is estimated at 1 in 2000 births. Additionally, it is estimated that there are nearly 65,000 intersex births worldwide per year. Intersex individuals may or may not be transgendered. For more information on intersex, visit the Intersex Society of North America’s web page at <http://www.isna.org>.

### **Why Don’t Transgender and Intersex Individuals Tell People About Their Gender Identification?**

Unfortunately, the social stigma associated with being a member of the Gender community is predominately negative. “There is a very real threat of violence, social ostracization with the loss of friends, family, employment, housing, and medical insurance” (<http://www.pflagcolumbus.org/educationtg.htm>). This potential for physical and emotional harm creates fear that prevents many people from telling others about their gender identity.

Gender identity and sexual orientation are not currently protected under federal hate crimes law. The Matthew Shepard Act (S.909), which would expand existing federal hate crime law to include crimes motivated by gender identity or sexual orientation passed in the House of Representatives on August 29, 2009. However, the bill is not yet scheduled for a vote in the Senate. Of the 45 states with hate crime laws only 12 provide protection against crimes based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Those



states are: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington. The District of Columbia also has such laws (<http://www.transgenderlegal.org/page.php?id=61>). Despite these laws, transgender persons are still often the victims of violent crimes. According to the **National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs**, murders of LGBT people in 2008 increased 28% from the previous year. ([http://transgenderlegal.org/headline\\_show.php?id=122](http://transgenderlegal.org/headline_show.php?id=122)). For more information, see the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force website documents at <http://www.ngltf.org>.

Additionally, gender identity and sexual orientation are not included as protected groups under EEOC anti-discrimination law. Though in recent years, “some courts have determined that discrimination against a transgendered individual may constitute unlawful gender stereotyping in violation of Title VII’s prohibition against sex discrimination” (<http://transworkplace.blogspot.com/2007/09/eec-releases-informal-discussion-of.html>). These advancements however, do not guarantee the rights of transgender people.

### **Why is the Coming Out Process Difficult for Transgender and Intersex Individuals?**

As stated above, revealing one’s transgender status poses a threat to one’s life and one’s lifestyle. As for gay people, a transgender person does not know how those around him or her will respond to such information which causes anxiety and fear about coming out. Also like for gay people, for some transgender people the process is not difficult. This would depend on the person’s comfort with those around him or her and with the level of support he or she receives from those people.

### **What Can Be Done To Overcome the Prejudice and Discrimination That Transgendered and Intersex Individuals Experience?**

This is not an easy question, for there is no simple answer. Media portrayals of the transgender community are often less than flattering and tend to perpetuate negative stereotypes. It is important that these images are changed to show the community as it actually is: as diverse as any other segment of the population with people from all walks of life included. While some members of the community may live up to the stereotypes, many more have advanced degrees, families to raise, and life struggles which are the same as everyone else’s.

Unfortunately, the negative stereotypes shown in the media coupled with anti-LGBTI religious and hate groups continue to propagate negative attitudes towards transgender and intersex people. For this reason, it is critical that the laws created to protect people from hate crimes and discrimination be expanded to offer explicit protection for the Gender Community. Additionally, it is necessary to include hate crimes against this population in crime statistics and to include specific training in the requirements for law enforcement agencies. To help end discrimination and insensitivity from the medical industry similar specific training is needed for medical personnel as well.

On a personal level, you as an ally can make an impact by intervening when you hear negative comments, sharing positive truths about the community, supporting the transgender or intersex people in your life, and by becoming active in movements to cause positive changes in the law.

# SECTION 4:

# RESOURCES

## HCC CAMPUS RESOURCES

HCC Diversity Council via  
Office of Institutional Equity  
Safe Zone contact- Renee Mack (renee.mack@hcc.edu. 713 718-8272)  
3100 Main, 7<sup>th</sup> floor

### **Certified Mental Health Professionals**

Jaime Torres, Central College, [jaime.torres@hccs.edu](mailto:jaime.torres@hccs.edu), 713 718-6165  
Dr. Scott Rinker, Northeast College, [lee.rinker@hccs.edu](mailto:lee.rinker@hccs.edu) 713 718-8069  
Mahnaz Kolani, Northwest College, [mahnaz.kolani@hccs.edu](mailto:mahnaz.kolani@hccs.edu) 713 718-7449  
Dr. Roman Alvarez, Southeast College, [roman.alvarez@hccs.edu](mailto:roman.alvarez@hccs.edu) 713 718-7977  
Pat Jensvold, Southwest College, [pat.jensvold@hccs.edu](mailto:pat.jensvold@hccs.edu) 713 718-7797

HCC Police Department  
All Main Campuses

Counseling Office  
All Main Campuses

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

American Civil Liberties Union, Houston chapter  
713- 942-8146  
[www.aclu-houston.org](http://www.aclu-houston.org)

AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc.  
713-623-6796  
[www.aidshelp.org](http://www.aidshelp.org)

Amigos Volunteers in Education and Service, Inc. (AVES)  
713-626-2837  
Email: [info@aves-health.org](mailto:info@aves-health.org)  
[www.aves-health.org](http://www.aves-health.org)

Bering Omega Community Services  
713-529-6071  
[www.beringomega.org](http://www.beringomega.org)

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church  
713-526-1017  
[www.beringumc.org](http://www.beringumc.org)

Bering Support Network  
713-526-1017

[www.beringsupportnetwork.org](http://www.beringsupportnetwork.org)

**First Unitarian Universalist Church**

713-526-5200

[www.firstuu.org](http://www.firstuu.org)

**Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Crises Hotline**

713-529-3211

[www.gayswitchboardhouston.org](http://www.gayswitchboardhouston.org)

**Gay & Lesbian Yellow Pages**

713-942-0084

[www.glyp.com](http://www.glyp.com)

**HATCH GLBT Youth Services**

[www.hatchyouth.org](http://www.hatchyouth.org)

**Houston Transgender Unity Committee (HTUC)**

Email: [info@htuc.org](mailto:info@htuc.org)

[www.houstontransgenderunity.org](http://www.houstontransgenderunity.org)

**Houston GLBT Community Center**

713-524-3818

[www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org](http://www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org)

**Montrose Counseling Center**

713-529-0037

[www.montrosecounselingcenter.org](http://www.montrosecounselingcenter.org)

**Outsmart Magazine**

[www.outsmartmagazine.com](http://www.outsmartmagazine.com)

**PFLAG Houston- Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**

[www.pflaghouston.org](http://www.pflaghouston.org)

**Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church**

[www.resurrectionmcc.org](http://www.resurrectionmcc.org)

**NATIONAL RESOURCES AND WEBSITES**

**ACPA College Student Educators Network**

**Standing Committee for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Awareness**

[www.myacpa.org/sc/sclgbta](http://www.myacpa.org/sc/sclgbta)

**Bisexual Resource Center**

617-424-9595

[www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org)

**Campus Pride**  
[www.campuspride.net](http://www.campuspride.net)

**Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation- GLAAD**  
<http://glaad.org>

**GLSEN: Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network**  
212-727-0135  
[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

**Human Rights Campaign**  
1-800-777-4723  
[www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

**Intersex Society of North America**  
[www.isna.org](http://www.isna.org)

**Lambda Legal**  
212-809-8585  
[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

**Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force**  
212-818-9639  
[www.lgirtf.org](http://www.lgirtf.org)

**National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum**  
202-483-6786  
[www.nblglf.org](http://www.nblglf.org)

**National Consortium of Directors of GLBT Resources in Higher Education**  
[www.lgbtcampus.org](http://www.lgbtcampus.org)

**National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**  
202-332-6483  
[www.ngltf.org](http://www.ngltf.org)

**National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization**  
202-466-8240

**National Transgender Advocacy Coalition**  
[www.ntac.org](http://www.ntac.org)

**PFLAG: Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays**  
202-467-8180  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

**Gay and Lesbian National Hot Line**  
1-888-843-4564  
[www.glnh.org](http://www.glnh.org)

**Gay and Lesbian Victims Assistance Hotline**  
Hotline: 1-800-259-1538  
Office: 915-533-6024

**Scholarships of Interest to LGB Students**  
[www.finaid.org/otheraid/gay-phtml](http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/gay-phtml)

**StopAIDS Project- San Francisco**  
415-575-1545  
[www.stopaids.org](http://www.stopaids.org)

**Family Pride Coalition**  
With Straight Spouse Support Network  
612-296-0699  
[www.familypride.org](http://www.familypride.org)

**Teaching Tolerance**  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

**Trikone (Gay and Lesbian South Asians)**  
408-270-8776  
[www.trikone.org](http://www.trikone.org)

### **Free education material for new partner notification website, So They Can Know**

Sexual Health Innovations is offering clinics and health departments across the country free educational material for patients about So They Can Know, a new STI partner notification website. Sign up at [www.stckclinic.org](http://www.stckclinic.org).

### **What is So They Can Know?**

[SoTheyCanKnow.org](http://SoTheyCanKnow.org) is designed to increase rates of partner notification among patients diagnosed with STIs. The free website provides tips, scripts, and videos to help patients notify their partners, and allow users who won't notify their partners themselves to send partners anonymous emails. These emails provide relevant health information and help partners find local testing centers.

### **Why will So They Can Know work?**

Prior to launch, Sexual Health Innovations conducted extensive research on the conceptual acceptability of anonymous email-based partner notification among both young adults and providers. After launch, Sexual Health Innovations used methods such as usability testing to further improve the design of the website. The website was developed with input from experts in the field of sexual health communication, technology, and partner notification.

### **Who else is using So They Can Know?**

So They Can Know is being promoted in over 20 clinics in the United States, and Planned Parenthood and So They Can Know have developed custom co-branded materials for their health centers.

### **How do I get free material?**

Sign up at [www.stckclinic.org](http://www.stckclinic.org) for one year of free educational material about the website to give to patients. We'll also share data with you about whether or not So They Can Know is being used in your area.

Contact us at [team@sexualhealthinnovations.org](mailto:team@sexualhealthinnovations.org) with any questions.

[www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)

## **BOOK LIST**

### ***General Interest***

A Straight Guide to GLBT Americans (2006) by Human Rights Campaign  
available at [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders (2003) by Jennifer Finney Boylan

Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price (1992) Edited by Blumenfeld

Created Equal: Why Gay Rights Matter to America (1994) by Davidoff & Nava

Transsexuals: Candid Answers to Private Questions (1996) by Ramsey

Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature (1995) Edited by Haggerty & Zimmerman

Stonewall (1993) By Duberman

### ***Campus Issues***

Addressing Homophobia and Heterosexism on College Campuses (2002) Edited by Elizabeth Cramer

Toward acceptance: Sexual orientation issues on campus (2000) Edited by Wall & Evans

Out & About on Campus: Personal Accounts of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgendered College students (2000) Edited by Kim Howard & Annie Stevens

Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students: Who They are and What They Need (1998)

Edited by Sanlo

Coming Out in College: The Struggle for a Queer Identity (1994) by Rhoads

Out on Campus: A How-to Manual of Gay and Lesbian Campus Activism (1990) by Crist

Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Gay and Lesbian Students, Teachers, and Curricula (1992)  
Edited by Harbeck

***Coming Out, Youth, Education***

Resource Guide to Coming Out (2004) by Human Rights Campaign

Guía de Recursos Para Salir Del Clóset

Resource Guide to Coming Out for African Americans  
(2004) by Human Rights Campaign  
available at [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

Transparent: Love, Family, and Living the T with Transgender Teenagers (2007) by Cris Beam

School's Out: The Impact of Gay and Lesbian Issues on America's Schools (1995) by Dan Woog

Becoming Visible: A Reader in Gay and Lesbian History for High School & College Students  
(1995) by Lewis

Two Teenagers in Twenty: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth (1995) Edited by heron

***Diversity in the LGBTQ Community***

Two-spirit People: American Indian Lesbian Women and Gay Men (1996) Edited by Brown

One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America (1996) by Boykin

Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of the Gay and Lesbian Experience (1995) Edited by  
Leong

Eyes of Desire: A Deaf Gay and Lesbian reader (1993) by Luczak

Copanaras: Latina Lesbians (1994) by Ramos

***Family, Marriage, & Relationships***

Straight Parents, Gay Children: Keeping Families Together (1999) by Robert A. Bernstein

Families of Value: Personal Profiles of Pioneering Lesbian and Gay Parents (2005) by Robert A.  
Bernstein

Lesbian and Gay Families Speak Out: Understanding the Joys and challenges of Diverse Family  
Life (1998) by Jane Levy Drucker

Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry (2004) by Evan  
Wolfson



Lesbian Parenting Book: A Guide to Creating Families and Raising Children (1995)

Getting Simon: Two Gay Doctors' Journey to Fatherhood (1995). by Morgen

### *Workplace Issues*

Sexual Identity on the Job: Issues and Services (1996) by Ellis & Riggle

Gays Issues in the Workplace (1993) by McNaught

Sexual Orientation in the Workplace: Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Heterosexuals Working Together (1996) by Zickerman & Simons

### *Academic Journals*

Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review

Journal of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Identity

Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy

Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social services

Journal of Homosexuality

Journal of Lesbian Studies

## FILM & DOCUMENTARY LIST

All Aboard! Rosie's Family Cruise (2006) 91 minutes, HBO Documentary Films

Boys Don't Cry (1999) 116 minutes, 20th Century Fox

The Brandon Teena Story (1998) 88 minutes, Docurama

Brokeback Mountain (2005) 134 minutes, Universal Studios

Freedom to Marry: A Journey to Justice (2004) 56 minutes, Turtle Time Productions

I Can't Marry You (2003) 57 minutes, Wolfe Video

Middle Sexes: Redefining He and She (2006) 75 minutes, HBO Documentary Films

Our House: A Very Real Documentary About Kids of Gay & Lesbian Parents (2000) 57 minutes,

Speak Up! Improving the Lives of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgendered Youth (2002) 30 minutes, Media Education Foundation

Transamerica (2005) 103 minutes, Weinstein Company

TransGeneration (2005) 300 minutes, New Video Group

## ARTICLES FOR ALLIES

- Washington, J., & Evans, N. J. (2000). Becoming an ally. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, R. Castaneda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters, & X. Zuniga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice*. New York: Routledge.
- Broido, E. M. (2000). Ways of being an ally to lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. In V. A. Wall & N. J. Evans (Eds.), *Toward acceptance: Sexual orientation issues on campus*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Connolly, M. (2000). Issues for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students in traditional college classrooms. In V. A. Wall & N. J. Evans (Eds.), *Toward acceptance: Sexual orientation issues on campus*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Conley, T. D., Calhoun, C., Evett, S. R., & Devine, P. G. (2001). Mistakes that heterosexual people make when trying to appear non-prejudiced: The view from LGB people. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 42, 21-43.
- Sausa, L. A. (2002). Updating college and university campus policies: Meeting the needs of trans students, staff, and faculty. In E. P. Cramer (Ed.), *Addressing homophobia and heterosexism on college campuses*.

# SECTION 5:

## APPENDIX

## Appendix A

### GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

This glossary is intended for those who would like to learn more about sexual identity and gender identity vocabulary and issues. It attempts to provide basic information and vocabulary to enable you to be a more informed ally in the GLBT community.

**Ally** – a person who supports and honors sexual diversity, acts accordingly to challenge homophobic, transphobic, and heterosexist remarks and behaviors, and is willing to explore and understand these forms of bias within him or herself. See also: YOU!

**Biphobia** – the fear and hatred of, or discomfort with people who are bisexual.

**Bisexual** – a person who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and relationally attracted to both men and women though not necessarily simultaneously.

**Civil Union** – A type of legal recognition given to non-married couples, particularly same-sex partners, so that they have access to benefits employed by married heterosexuals. In the United States, civil unions are granted and recognized in Vermont and Connecticut.

**Closet** – being “in the closet” means keeping your sexual orientation a secret. Many GLBT people remain in the closet because of fear of rejection, harassment, and anti-gay violence, but unlike actual physical closet, many LBCT people find that this mental closet is an isolated, confining place.

**Coming Out** - the developmental process in which a person acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates his/her sexual orientation. Coming out is a lifelong process, starting with coming to oneself and then to others.

**Crossdresser** – A person (typically heterosexual) who wears clothes that are considered by the culture to be appropriate for another gender but not one’s own (preferred term to “transvestite”).

**Discrimination** – Differential treatment that favors one individual or group over another based on prejudice.

**Domestic Partners or Domestic Partnerships** – Individuals who share a life together, but are not married or joined in a civil union. A number of jurisdictions and institutions recognize and grant rights to same-sex domestic partners.

**Drag or In Drag** – Wearing clothing considered appropriate for someone of another sex.

**Drag King or Drag Queen** – a woman (typically a lesbian) and a man (typically a man), respectively, who employ gender-marked clothing, makeup, and mannerisms for their own and other people’s appreciation or for entertainment.

**FTM** – A female-to-male transsexual, or a transsexual man. Some transsexuals reject this term, arguing that they have always been male and are only making that identity visible.

**Gay Male** - a man who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and relationally

attracted to other men.

**Gender** - a sociological construct defining the collection of characteristics that are culturally associated with women and men. The term sex refers to "female" and "male." Gender refers to the traits that we label "masculine" and "feminine."

**Gender Identity** - has to do with whether a person perceives him/herself to be a man or a woman; research indicates that gender identity is typically established by 3 years of age.

**Gender Role** - the norms of expected behavior for men and women assigned primarily on the basis of biological sex; a sociological construct that varies from culture to culture.

**Gender Queer** - A term used by many trans youth who do not identify as either male or female and who often seek to blur gender lines.

**Gender Variant** - An alternative term for transgender, meaning someone who varies from traditional expression of "masculine" and "feminine".

**Heterocentrism** - the assumption that everyone is heterosexual unless otherwise indicated.

**Heterosexism** - the individual, group, or institutional norms and behaviors that result from the assumption that all people are heterosexual. This system of oppression, which assumes that heterosexuality is inherently normal and superior, negates LGBT peoples' lives and relationships

**Heterosexual**—a person who is primarily or exclusively emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and relationally attracted to people of the "opposite" sex

**Heterosexual Privilege** - the benefits and advantages that heterosexuals receive in a heterosexist culture. Also, the benefits that lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals receive as a result of claiming a heterosexual identity and denying a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity.

**Homophobia**—the fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who love and sexually desire members of the same sex. Homophobic reactions often lead to intolerance, bigotry, and violence against anyone not acting within heterosexual norms. Because most LGBT people are raised in the same society as heterosexuals, they learn the same beliefs and stereotypes prevalent in the dominant society, leading to a phenomenon known as "internalized homophobia."

**Intersex** - a person who is born with "sex chromosomes", external genitalia, or an internal reproductive system that is not considered "standard" for either male or female (preferred term over "hermaphrodite"). About 1 in 2,000 children, or five children per day in the U.S. are born visibly intersex.

**MTF** - a male-to-female transsexual, or a transsexual woman. Some transsexuals reject this term, arguing that they have always been female and are only making that identity visible.

**Lavender**—color identified with LGBT culture, a mix of pink and blue.

**Lesbian**—a woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and relationally attracted to other women.

**Oppression** – the systematic exploitation of one social group by another for its own benefit. It involves institutional control, ideological domination, and the promulgation of the dominant group’s culture on the oppressed. Oppression =Prejudice + Power.

**Outing**—exposing someone’s sexual orientation to others, usually without their permission.

**Queer**—term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual—includes lesbians, gay men, bisexual people, and transgendered people. For many LGBT people, the word “queer” has a negative connotation and provokes discomfort: however, many younger gay people are comfortable using the term and have reclaimed” it.

**Sex**— A biological term dividing a species into male or female, usually sex chromosomes (XX = female, XY = male): hormone levels, secondary sex characteristics, and internal and external genitalia may also be considered criteria.

**Sexual behavior**—what a person does in terms of sexual acts.

**Sexuality**—the complex range of components that make us sexual beings: includes emotional, physical, and sexual aspects, as well as self-identification (including sexual orientation and gender), behavioral preferences and practices, fantasies, and feelings of affection and emotional affinity.

**Sexual Orientation**—an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, affectional, and relational attraction to another person. Can involve fantasy, behavior, and self-identification: a person’s general makeup or alignment in terms of partner attraction.

**Sexual Preference**—what a person likes or prefers to do sexually: a conscious recognition or choice not to be confused with sexual orientation. This term is commonly considered offensive when used in place of “sexual orientation.”

**Transgendered**—the old understanding of the word meant a person whose gender identity differs from what is culturally associated with their biological sex at birth. However, as information has evolved, it is now an umbrella term that includes a wide range of identities and includes preoperative, post-operative, and non-operative transsexual people. In its general sense, it refers to anyone whose behavior or identity falls outside of stereotypical expectations for their gender.

**Transphobia**—the fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are transgendered.

**Transsexual**—a medical term referring to a person whose gender identity differs from what is culturally associated with their biological sex at birth and who chose to undergo sex reassignment surgery.

**Transvestite**—an individual who dresses in the opposite’ gender clothing for a variety of reasons.

**Two-Spirited**—Native American term to refer to persons with characteristics of both genders or attraction to both genders: culturally revered for their special qualities.

## Offensive Terminology to Avoid

**OFFENSIVE:** *"homosexual"* (as a n. or adj.)

**PREFERRED:** *"gay"* (adj.); *"gay man"* or *"lesbian"* (n.)

Please use "lesbian" or "gay man" to describe people attracted to members of the same sex. Because of the clinical history of the word "homosexual," it has been adopted by anti-gay extremists to suggest that lesbians and gay men are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered - notions discredited by both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using "homosexual" except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using "homosexual" as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word "gay."

**OFFENSIVE:** *"homosexual relations/relationship," "homosexual couple," "homosexual sex,"* etc.

**PREFERRED:** *"relationship"* (or *"sexual relationship"*), *"couple"* (or, if necessary, *"gay couple"*), *"sex,"* etc.

Identifying a same-sex couple as "a homosexual couple," characterizing their relationship as "a homosexual relationship," or identifying their intimacy as "homosexual sex" is offensive and should be avoided. These constructions are frequently used by anti-gay extremists to denigrate gay and lesbian people, couples and relationships. As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion or relationship "gay" or "lesbian" unless you would call the same activity, emotion or relationship "straight" if engaged in by someone of another sexual orientation. In most cases, your readers, viewers or listeners will be able to discern people's genders and/or sexual orientations through the names of the parties involved your depictions of their relationships, and your use of pronouns.

**OFFENSIVE:** *"sexual preference"*

**PREFERRED:** *"sexual orientation"*

The phrase "sexual preference" is generally used to suggest that being lesbian or gay is a choice and therefore "curable." The term "sexual orientation" is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexual men and women.

**OFFENSIVE:** *"gay lifestyle"* or *"homosexual lifestyle"*

**PREFERRED:** *"lesbian"* or *"gay"*

There is no single lesbian or gay lifestyle. Lesbians and gay men are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrase "gay lifestyle" is used to denigrate lesbians and gay men, suggesting that their sexual orientation is a choice and therefore "curable."

**OFFENSIVE:** *"admitted homosexual"* or *"avowed homosexual"*

**PREFERRED:** *"openly lesbian"* or *"openly gay"*

Dated term used to describe those who are openly lesbian or gay or who have recently come out of the closet. The words "admitted" or "avowed" suggest that being a lesbian or gay man is somehow shameful or inherently secretive. Avoid the use of the word "homosexual" in either case.

*(continued next page...)*



**OFFENSIVE:** "gay agenda" or "homosexual agenda"

**PREFERRED:** "lesbian and gay civil rights movement" or "lesbian and gay movement"

Lesbians and gay men are as diverse in our political beliefs as other communities. Our commitment to equal rights is one we share with civil rights advocates who are not necessarily lesbian or gay. "Lesbian and gay movement" accurately describes the historical effort to achieve understanding and equal treatment for gays and lesbians. Notions of a "homosexual agenda" are rhetorical inventions of anti-gay extremists seeking to portray as sinister the lesbian and gay civil rights movement.

**OFFENSIVE:** "special rights"

**PREFERRED:** "equal rights" or "equal protection"

Anti-gay extremists frequently characterize civil rights and equal protection of the law for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans as "special rights" in an attempt to energize opposition to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws.

**"fag," "faggot," "dyke," "homo," "queen," "she-male," "he-she," "it," "tranny" and similar epithets.**

The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to hate words for other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote which reveals the bias of the person quoted. So that such words are not given credibility in the media, it is preferred that reporters say, "The person used a derogatory word for a lesbian, gay man or transgender person."

**"deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional," "diseased," "perverted," "destructive" and similar descriptions**

The notion that being gay or lesbian is a psychological disorder was discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Today, words such as "deviant," "diseased" and "disordered" often are used to portray lesbians and gay men as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society. Words such as these should be avoided in stories about the lesbian and gay community. If they must be used, they should be quoted directly in a way that reveals the bias of the person being quoted.

**Associating gay men, lesbians, same-sex relationships or homosexuality with pedophilia, child sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and incest.**

Homosexuality and/or being gay is not synonymous with pedophilia, child sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest. These associations often are used to suggest that lesbians and gay men pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular. Such suggestions are defamatory and should be avoided, except in a direct quote which reveals the bias of the person quoted.

<http://www.glaad.org/media/guide/offensive.php>

## Appendix C

### PRIDE SYMBOLS

Below you will find commonly used symbols. Each has significant meaning and history within the GLBT community.

#### Double Man's Symbols



Derived from the astrological symbol for Mars, the Greek god of war and patron of warriors. The arrow can be seen as a phallic symbol. A double man's symbol represents man loving man.

#### Double Woman's Symbol



Also known as “the mirror of Venus”. The single symbol represents the planet Venus as well as femininity. The double woman's symbol represents woman loving woman.

#### Lambda



The symbol was originally used by the Gay Activists Alliance of New York in 1970. Because of its official adoption by the GAA, the lambda became a way for the gay community to identify each other. The reasoning was that the lambda would easily be mistaken for a college fraternity symbol and ignored by most people.

#### Pink Triangle



The pink triangle is a symbol taken directly from the Nazi concentration camps. An estimated 25,000 people were “convicted” and were sent to prisons and concentration camps. Their sentence also included sterilization, castration, and even death. In the 1980's, when the triangle's popularity truly began to take off, ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) adopted it as their symbol.

## Black Triangle



Like the pink triangle, the black triangle is also rooted in Nazi Germany. Although lesbians were not included in Paragraph 175 prohibition of homosexuality, there is evidence to indicate that the black triangle was used to designate prisoners with anti-social behavior. Considering that the Nazi idea of womanhood focused on children, kitchen, and church, black triangle prisoners may have included lesbians, prostitutes; women who refused to bear children, and women with other “anti-social” traits. As the pink triangle is historically a male symbol, lesbians and feminists have similarly reclaimed the black triangle as a symbol of pride and solidarity.

## Rainbow Flag



The Rainbow Flag as we know it today was developed by San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker in 1978. It’s an all-purpose symbol that can be used by anyone regardless of his or her own sexual orientation. Rainbows have been used since ancient times in all kinds of cultures – Greek, African, Native American, and Christian; also, the Rainbow Coalition has made use of the rainbow as a freedom symbol.

## The Victory Over AIDS Flag



The Victory Over AIDS Flag modifies the rainbow flag by adding a black stripe at the bottom. Suggested by a San Francisco group, the black stripe commemorates those we have lost to AIDS. Sergeant Leonard Matlovich, a much-decorated Vietnam Veteran dying of AIDS, proposed that when a cure is eventually found the black stripes should be removed from all the flags and ceremoniously burned in Washington, D.C.

## Human Rights Campaign Logo



As America's largest gay and lesbian organization, the Human Rights Campaign provides a national voice on gay and lesbian issues. The Human Rights Campaign effectively lobbies Congress; mobilizes grassroots action in diverse communities; invests strategically to elect a fair-minded Congress; and increases public understanding through innovative education and communication strategies.

HRC is a bipartisan organization that works to advance equality based on sexual orientation and gender expression and identity, to ensure that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.

## Bisexual Symbols



Indicating bisexuality with the gender symbols can get both fun and complicated. Basically, it starts with whatever sex the bisexual person is and puts a male symbol on one side and a female on the other—a combination of the straight and gay symbols.

## Transgender Symbols



Transgendered people have two symbols to choose from.

1. Mercury's symbol has a cross extending down to represent femininity and a crescent moon at the top to represent masculinity. The two are placed at opposite ends of the circle to strike a balance between the male and female parts. This symbol seems to speak more to those transgendered persons who identify hermaphroditically or androgynously.
2. The second and most obvious is a merging of the male and female symbols rather than interlocking. By putting both the cross and the arrow on the same ring, it symbolizes the male and female parts inherent in one person. This symbol is the most inclusive of the two and the most recognizable.

# What's Your Attitude?

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

These statements are designed to help you reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors regarding homosexuality.

Respond to each item by circling the number after each statement according to this scale:

**1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree**

(For the purposes of this survey, the term "gay" is used to refer to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people.)

1. I feel awkward when I'm around people who are gay. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I believe that gay people deserve the negative treatment they receive. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I believe gay people should not work with children. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I openly object to derogatory remarks about gay people. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I can enjoy the company of gay people. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Marriage between gay individuals is okay with me. 1 2 3 4 5
7. It does not matter to me whether my friends are gay or straight. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I am concerned that a gay person may 'come on' to me. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I laugh at jokes about gay people. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Organizations that promote gay rights are not necessary. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Gay people should not have "special protection" under the law. 1 2 3 4 5
12. It bothers me to see gay people display affection in public. 1 2 3 4 5
13. I would be uncomfortable rooming with a gay person at a conference. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Gay people "suffer" from distorted images and stereotypes. 1 2 3 4 5
15. It would "disturb" me to learn that a close friend is gay. 1 2 3 4 5

## GLBT History Quiz

- |     |  |                                 |
|-----|--|---------------------------------|
| ___ | 1. Event marking the beginning of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights movement in the United States  | A. T.E. Lawrence<br>"of Arabia" |
| ___ | 2. Symbol for gay pride originating in Nazi concentration camps  | B. Jane Addams                  |
| ___ | 3. Pulitzer Prize winning author of <i>The Color Purple</i> who discussed her bisexuality in a later work  | C. Peter<br>Tchaikovsky         |
| ___ | 4. Prolific gay American playwright who won two Pulitzer prizes and four New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for best play  | D. Oscar Wilde                  |
| ___ | 5. Greek philosopher who authored the first extensive writings on love between men   | E. Bayard Rustin                |
| ___ | 6. British archaeologist and military strategist who carved a statue of his Turkish partner and placed it on top of their home   | F. Sappho                       |
| ___ | 7. Author who first used the word "gay", meaning homosexual, in print  | G. Stonewall                    |
| ___ | 8. Nineteenth century writer who boldly proclaimed his pride in being gay  | H. Alexander<br>the Great       |
| ___ | 9. First professional athlete to come out of the closet while still actively competing   | I. Plato                        |
| ___ | 10. Who said, "If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door."?   | J. Michelangelo                 |
| ___ | 11. Openly gay advisor and speechwriter for Martin Luther King, Jr. who was the chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, in which Dr. King proclaimed, "I have a dream." | K. Pink Triangle                |
| ___ | 12. Russian composer who started his professional life working as a civil servant for the St. Petersburg Department of Justice.  | L. Tennessee<br>Williams        |
| ___ | 13. Sculptor and painter who wrote poetry inspired by the love of men  | M. Martina<br>Navratilova       |
| ___ | 14. Greek poet whose home gave rise to the modern use of the word "lesbian"  | N. Harvey Milk                  |
| ___ | 15. Macedonian king who, in his grief over his male lover's death, visited the oracles to learn if his lover was a god   | O. Gertrude Stein               |
| ___ | 16. Nobel Peace Prize winning suffragette and founder of the Hull House who shared her life for 40 years with Mary Rozet Smith, her "spouse-surrogate"                           | P. Alice Walker                 |

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Answers: 1) G; 2) K; 3) P; 4) L; 5) I; 6) A; 7) O; 8) D; 9) M; 10) N; 11) E; 12) C; 13) J; 14) F; 15) H; 16) B

[www.uab.edu/safezone](http://www.uab.edu/safezone)

## Appendix F

### ENDNOTES

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7. Buhrke, R. A., & Douce, L. A. (1991). Training issues for counseling psychologists in working with lesbian women and gay men. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 19, 216-234
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