

**Southern Illinois University  
Edwardsville**



**Safe Zone  
Training Manual**

Revised October 2014  
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*With sponsorship by the Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion*

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# Safe Zone at SIUE

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## What is Safe Zone?

Safe Zone is a campus-wide network of individuals who can act as resources for members of the campus community who have questions or concerns related to LGBT issues. Safe Zone members can be recognized by prominently displaying the Safe Zone logo, thereby highlighting their visibility to the University community.

The primary responsibility of an Ally is to support individuals who have questions or concerns about such topics as sexual identity, sexual harassment, community resources, and support systems. Allies are not trained counselors, but rather good listeners who can direct those who come to them for assistance to professionals and other community resources. Allies are connected in a network on campus community members who support each other in the mission of creating a safe and welcoming environment for all, specifically those who may be LGBT.

Allies are expected to convey and support the idea that LGBT individuals have the right to be respected. Thus, being an Ally means not tolerating homophobic and heterosexist comments and actions, but addressing them in an educational and informative manner.

Through participate in the Safe Zone training, you will be able to:

- Define key terms
- Identify heterosexism/homophobia in yourself and others
- Articulate the damages they cause
- Distinguish between basic myths and facts about bisexuality and transgenderism
- Refer individuals for counseling or other special needs
- Listen attentively and actively
- Describe the process of coming out
- Respond appropriately to individual needs
- Refer individuals to more resources available should they desire them

For more information, please contact a member of the Safe Zone committee ([www.siue.edu/lgbt](http://www.siue.edu/lgbt)). If there is a mental health emergency, please contact SIUE Counseling Services at 650-2197 during business hours. If after hours, contact 911 or a university housing staff member (in University Housing only).

Adapted from the Allies Program at University of Delaware by V.Dean (2012)

# LGBT History: Important Moments, People, and Policy

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This timeline provides information about the gay rights movement in the United States from 1924 to the present: including the Stonewall riots; the contributions of Harvey Milk; the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy; the first civil unions; the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York; and more.

1924-The Society for Human Rights in Chicago becomes the country's earliest known gay rights organization.

1948-Alfred Kinsey publishes *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, revealing to the public that homosexuality is far more widespread than was commonly believed.

1951-The Mattachine Society, the first national gay rights organization, is formed by Harry Hay, considered by many to be the founder of the gay rights movement.

1956-The Daughters of Bilitis, a pioneering national lesbian organization, is founded.

1962-Illinois becomes the first state in the U.S. to decriminalize homosexual acts between consenting adults in private.

1969-The Stonewall riots transform the gay rights movement from one limited to a small number of activists into a widespread protest for equal rights and acceptance. Patrons of a gay bar in New York's Greenwich Village, the Stonewall Inn, fight back during a police raid on June 27, sparking three days of riots.

1973

- The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders.
- Harvey Milk runs for city supervisor in San Francisco. He runs on a socially liberal platform and opposes government involvement in personal sexual matters. Milk comes in 10th out of 32 candidates, earning 16,900 votes, winning the Castro District and other liberal neighborhoods. He receives a lot of media attention for his passionate speeches, brave political stance, and media skills.

1976 -San Francisco Mayor George Moscone appoints Harvey Milk to the Board of Permit Appeals, making Milk the first openly gay city commissioner in the United States. Milk decides to run for the California State Assembly and Moscone is forced to fire him from the Board of Permit Appeals after just five weeks. Milk loses the State Assembly race by fewer than 4,000 votes. Believing the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club will never support him politically, Milk co-founds the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club after his election loss.

1977-Activists in Miami, Florida pass a civil rights ordinance making sexual orientation discrimination illegal in Dade County. Save Our Children, a campaign by a Christian fundamentalist group and headed by singer Anita Bryant, is launched in response to the

ordinance. In the largest special election of any in Dade County history, 70% vote to overturn the ordinance. It is a crushing defeat for gay activists.

1978

- On January 8, Harvey Milk makes national news when he is sworn in as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Running against 16 other candidates, he wins the election by 30 percent. Milk begins his term by sponsoring a civil rights bill that outlaws sexual orientation discrimination. Only one supervisor votes against it and Mayor Moscone signs it into law.
- John Briggs drops out of the California governor's race, but receives support for Proposition 6, also known as the Briggs Initiative, a proposal to fire any teacher or school employee who publicly supports gay rights. Harvey Milk campaigns against the bill and attends every event hosted by Briggs. In the summer, attendance greatly increases at Gay Pride marches in San Francisco and Los Angeles, partly in response to Briggs. President Jimmy Carter, former Governor Ronald Reagan, and Governor Jerry Brown speak out against the proposition. On November 7, voters reject the proposition by more than a million votes.
- On November 27, Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone are assassinated by Dan White, another San Francisco city supervisor, who had recently resigned and wanted his job back, but was being passed over because he wasn't the best fit for the liberal leaning Board of Supervisors and the ethnic diversity in White's district. San Francisco pays tribute to Harvey Milk by naming several locations after him, included Harvey Milk Plaza at the intersection of Market and Castro streets. The San Francisco Gay Democratic Club changes its name to the Harvey Milk Memorial Gay Democratic Club.

1982-Wisconsin becomes the first state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

1993-The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is instituted for the U.S. military, permitting gays to serve in the military but banning homosexual activity. President Clinton's original intention to revoke the prohibition against gays in the military was met with stiff opposition; this compromise, which has led to the discharge of thousands of men and women in the armed forces, was the result.

1996-In *Romer v. Evans*, the Supreme Court strikes down Colorado's Amendment 2, which denied gays and lesbians protections against discrimination, calling them "special rights." According to Justice Anthony Kennedy, "We find nothing special in the protections Amendment 2 withholds. These protections . . . constitute ordinary civil life in a free society."

2000-Vermont becomes the first state in the country to legally recognize civil unions between gay or lesbian couples. The law states that these "couples would be entitled to the same benefits, privileges, and responsibilities as spouses." It stops short of referring to same-sex unions as marriage, which the state defines as heterosexual.

2003

- The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Lawrence v. Texas* that sodomy laws in the U.S. are unconstitutional. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote, “Liberty presumes an autonomy of self that includes freedom of thought, belief, expression, and certain intimate conduct.”
- In November, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that barring gays and lesbians from marrying violates the state constitution. The Massachusetts Chief Justice concluded that to “deny the protections, benefits, and obligations conferred by civil marriage” to gay couples was unconstitutional because it denied “the dignity and equality of all individuals” and made them “second-class citizens.” Strong opposition followed the ruling.

2004-On May 17, same-sex marriages become legal in Massachusetts.

2005-Civil unions become legal in Connecticut in October.

2006-Civil unions become legal in New Jersey in December.

2007-In November, the House of Representatives approves a bill ensuring equal rights in the workplace for gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals.

2008

- In February, a New York State appeals court unanimously votes that valid same-sex marriages performed in other states must be recognized by employers in New York, granting same-sex couples the same rights as other couples.
- In February, Oregon passes a law that allows same-sex couples to register as domestic partners allowing them some spousal rights of married couples.
- On May 15, the California Supreme Court rules that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry. By November 3rd, more than 18,000 same-sex couples have married. On November 4, California voters approved a ban on same-sex marriage called Proposition 8. The attorney general of California, Jerry Brown, asked the state's Supreme Court to review the constitutionality of Proposition 8. The ban throws into question the validity of the more than 18,000 marriages already performed, but Attorney General Brown reiterated in a news release that he believed the same-sex marriages performed in California before November 4 should remain valid, and the California Supreme Court, which upheld the ban in May 2009, agreed.
- November 4, voters in California, Arizona, and Florida approved the passage of measures that ban same-sex marriage. Arkansas passed a measure intended to bar gay men and lesbians from adopting children.
- On October 10, the Supreme Court of Connecticut rules that same-sex couples have the right to marry. This makes Connecticut the second state, after Massachusetts, to legalize civil marriage for same-sex couples. The court rules that the state cannot deny gay and lesbian couples the freedom to marry under Connecticut's

constitution, and that the state's civil union law does not provide same-sex couples with the same rights as heterosexual couples.

- On November 12, same-sex marriages begin to be officially performed in Connecticut.

## 2009

- On April 3, the Iowa Supreme Court unanimously rejects the state law banning same-sex marriage. Twenty-one days later, county recorders are required to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.
- On April 7, the Vermont Legislature votes to override Gov. Jim Douglas's veto of a bill allowing gays and lesbians to marry, legalizing same-sex marriage. It is the first state to legalize gay marriage through the legislature.
- On May 6, the governor of Maine legalized same-sex marriage in that state in Maine; however, citizens voted to overturn that law when they went to the polls in November, and Maine became the 31st state to ban the practice.
- On June 3, New Hampshire governor John Lynch signs legislation allowing same-sex marriage. The law stipulates that religious organizations and their employees will not be required to participate in the ceremonies. New Hampshire is the sixth state in the nation to allow same-sex marriage.
- On June 17, President Obama signs a referendum allowing the same-sex partners of federal employees to receive benefits. They will not be allowed full health coverage, however. This is Obama's first major initiative in his campaign promise to improve gay rights.
- On August 12, President Obama posthumously awards Harvey Milk the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

## 2010

- March 3, Congress approves a law signed in December 2009 that legalizes same-sex marriage in the District of Columbia.
- August 4, Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker ruled that Proposition 8, the 2008 referendum that banned same-sex marriage in California, violates the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. "Proposition 8 singles out gays and lesbians and legitimates their unequal treatment," Vaughn wrote in his opinion. "Proposition 8 perpetuates the stereotype that gays and lesbians are incapable of forming long-term loving relationships and that gays and lesbians are not good parents."
- December 18, the U.S. Senate voted 65 to 31 in favor of repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell, the Clinton-era military policy that forbids openly gay men and women from serving in the military. On Dec. 18, President Obama officially repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell".

2011- June 24, New York passes a law to allow same-sex marriage. New York is now the largest state that allows gay and lesbian couples to marry. The vote comes on the eve of the city's annual Gay Pride Parade and gives new momentum to the national gay-rights movement. The marriage bill is approved with a 33 to 29 vote.

Adapted from: The American Gay Rights Movement: A Timeline — Infoplease.com

## Listening Techniques

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Most people are capable of using their ears every day to hear, however, listening is deliberate and can convey intellectual interest and caring support to the speaker. By developing one's listening skills, an ally can dramatically improve the coming out experience or any other sensitive topic related to sexual or gender identity. Listening is also at the core of establishing common ground with others who may or may not share one's views. Hence it can be valuable when confronted with hateful or ignorant beliefs about LGBT people.

Consider **the LARA method** of responding to questions or comments:

(**Note:** Most of us tend to start with step three, especially if the question or comment is a hostile or threatening one.)

### Step One: LISTEN

When in a conversation that has conflict, one often listens to the other until they get their facts wrong and then utilizes real facts to make a fool of them. Instead, the LARA method encourages one **to listen until you hear the moral principle** that they are speaking from or a feeling, sentiment or experience that you share. Listen until you find a way in which you can open your heart and make a connection with them.

Try to understand **what lies at the core of the question:** the fear, uncertainty, anger, frustration, or the truth offered by the person talking to you. What might their voice inflection or emotional state tell you? What assumptions might their question demonstrate?

What do they really want to know? What is legitimate? If you believe they don't really want to know anything, but are just attacking you, consider what part of their questions might be considered reasonable by others in an audience. **It's also important to listen to what the person is actually saying.** In trying to understand what might be behind the question or comment, we don't want to miss what the person literally said.

### Step Two: AFFIRM

This the step we often don't consciously consider. **Express the connection you found when you listened:** whether it's a feeling, experience or principle you have in common. Affirm whatever you find in their statement that represents a reasonable issue or fear. If you can't find anything, there are other ways to affirm. The exact words don't matter- the

important part is to convey the message that you're not going to attack or hurt the other person and that you know they have as much integrity as you do.

To be affirming, this step must be genuine, rather than perceived as "slick" or "sweet talking". It's also generally best to speak spontaneously from the heart rather than to develop standard answers. Share of yourself in the process. Affirming is not a natural process for many of us, but it gets easier with practice.

### **Step Three: RESPOND**

We often start at this step. Wait. Listen. Affirm.

Debaters, politicians and sometimes the rest of us often avoid answering the questions that was asked and instead answer a different question in order to remain in control of the situation. Instead, using LARA, **answer the question. Respond to the issue the person raised. If you agree, say that too**, even if it feels like you're giving up ground. By doing this you convey the message that you're not afraid of the other person and that their questions and concerns deserve to be taken seriously. If you don't know the answer, say so. Refer them to other resources if you have them or tell them you will find out the answer if appropriate.

Sometimes it may seem the other person does not really want information but is simply expecting to or trying to fluster or attack you. Reacting with respect rather than defensiveness or anger is important. It shows respect for the question or statement, rather than being "blown off".

Personal insight and experiences often reach people in a way that abstract facts do not (however, make sure not to distract from the primary focus of the conversation).

### **Step Four: ADD INFORMATION**

This gives you a **chance to share additional information that you may want to give** the person. It may help the other person consider the the issue in a new light or redirect the conversation in a more positive direction. This is a good time to state whatever facts are relevant to the conversation. This may also involve correcting any mistaken facts they mentioned because you have already established a connection, the other person is more apt to hearing your facts than if you had started here. Consider offering resources such as books, organizations, websites, specific people, websites or a personal anecdote.

### **Some Beginning Affirmation Phrases**

I agree with you about...

\_\_\_ is something most of us care about.

I'm concerned about \_\_\_ too.

I think you're right about...

I've heard that too.

We sure see that in the media a lot...

No one really wants to... (see people get hurt, for example)

I really respect you for.../I've felt like that before too...

# Coming Out

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The term “coming out” (of the closet) refers to the life-long process of development of a positive gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender identity. It is a very long and difficult struggle for many people because they often have to confront numerous homophobic attitudes and discriminatory practices along the way. Many individuals first need to struggle with their own negative stereotypes and feelings of homophobia that they learned while growing up. Before these people can feel good about who they are, they will need to challenge their own attitudes and take them from the lower end of that homophobic continuum (repulsion, pity, tolerance) to feelings of appreciation and admiration. It often takes years of painful work to develop a positive LGBT identity. Then, many individuals begin to make decisions about whom to tell that they are LGBT. Many of these people are afraid to come out to their friends and family.

## Some common questions about “Coming Out”:

What might LGBT people be afraid of when coming out?

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

How might LGBT people feel about coming out to someone?

- Scared
- Vulnerable
- Relieved/excited
- Wondering how they will react
- Proud

How might someone feel after an LGBT person comes out to them?

- Scared
- Shocked
- Disbelief
- Uncomfortable
- Not sure what to do/say
- Wondering why they came out to you
- Supportive
- Flattered/honored

Why might LGBT people want to come out to friends/family?

- Angry/disgusted
- End the hiding game
- Feel closer to people
- Be able to be “whole” around them
- Stop wasting energy trying to hide aspects
- Feeling like they have integrity
- To make statement that “gay is okay”

What might LGBT people want from the people they come out to?

- Acceptance
- Support
- Understanding
- Comfort
- Closer friendship
- Knowing it won’t negatively impact the relationship
- A hug and smile
- Acknowledgement of their feelings

## **When a Person Tells You They Are LGBT**

Try to be aware that:

- The person is likely to have spent many hours in thoughtful preparation and shares the revelation with keen awareness of the possible risk.
- There is no way for the person to predict your reaction accurately. It is likely that the person spent their entire life in a society that teaches people to despise gay people.
- It is important to understand that the person has not changed because of the new information you have received concerning their sexuality. You may be shocked by the revelation, but this is still the same person as before.
- Don't ask questions that would have been considered rude in the relationship prior to the disclosure. This person has the same sensibilities as before. However, you may well need to and be encouraged to "catch up".
- Be honest and open about your feelings. It makes the sharing more complete and makes change possible.
- It's not about you. The revelation may impact your relationship but your primary responsibility is to keep the focus on the person who came out to you.
- Don't ask "why" or "how" they are gay.

Common questions include:

- How long have you known you were LGBT? Is there someone special?
- Has it been hard for you to carrying this secret? Is there some way I can help?
- Have I ever offended you unknowingly?

### **What NOT to do**

A. Discounting: This makes their experience appear unimportant. It communicates a lack of understanding and a desire to avoid the issue. Examples:

- "Don't worry; you're not the only one."
- "So? A lot of people are gay. It's not a big deal."

B. Moralizing: This is placing your values and opinions on someone else. Often this is very subtle.

- "Why didn't you tell me earlier? You shouldn't be ashamed of yourself."
- These responses imply people who come out sooner are better – not the case! When and to whom someone comes out is the choice of the individual.

C. Intellectualizing: This takes away from the personal and emotional experience of coming out.

- "Society oppresses the best of us, doesn't it?"
- "Heterosexism and homophobia are everywhere. "
- "It sounds like you must have a homophobic view that this heterosexist society has caused you to have."

D. Give Advice: When you give advice, you are taking responsibility. Ideally we want to empower people to make their own decisions.

- "I think you need to come out to everyone."
- Offering a pamphlet and suggesting steps to take...often a person just wanted to tell you – they're not asking for your help.
- "Why don't you go see a counselor?"

- There are appropriate times to refer people to a counselor – someone coming out to you is not usually one of them unless they specifically ask for this or seem like they are having a hard time being comfortable with their identity.

**What to do instead:**

- Be an effective listener, and empathize!
- Be patient and allow them to tell you at their own pace.
- Acknowledge the risk they took by coming out - compliment their courage.
- Instead of saying, “It doesn’t matter to me.” say, “Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me.”
- If you feel uncomfortable or confused about this person’s identity, it’s okay to tell them that. It took them time to come out to you and you can say that it will take some time to get used to the idea as well.
- Ask what you can do to empower the person.
- Keep their confidence and respect their privacy. Do NOT out them to anyone else – it’s not your story to tell and it should be up to the person to come out to whoever they want to at their own pace, unless they specifically ask you.

Adapted from material by Vernon Wall and Jamie Washington, 1989 by V. Dean (2012) and from the Spectrum Center at the University of Michigan.

# Gay Identity Development Theory

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## Cass Identity Model

There are stage development theories that attempt to describe the development of a lesbian or gay identity. Cass' (1979) *Homosexuality Identity Development Model* is the most widely known and used. Her model includes six stages that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The following stages are broadened to include bisexual and/or transgender people:

STAGE	TASK	SAMPLE STATEMENTS
<b>Identity Confusion</b>	Begin to question whether one might be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.	Could I be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?
<b>Identity Comparison</b>	Alienation from what has been familiar.	Maybe I am lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. I'm alone.
<b>Identity Tolerance</b>	Actively seek out other LGBT people and encounter positive support.	Where are other LGBT people?
<b>Identity Acceptance</b>	Prefer LGBT people over heterosexuals. Selective coming out.	I am lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. I can come out to some people.
<b>Identity Pride</b>	Pride in new identity and rejection of attempts to devalue LGBT people.	I am proud to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. I don't (and won't) pass for straight.
<b>Identity Synthesis</b>	Acceptance and integration of new identity along with acceptance and rejection of aspects of heterosexual culture. Typically out to most people.	I am an okay person who happens to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.

Source: Virginia Tech Safe Zone Manual, 2012.

## LGBTQ Vocabulary & Key Terms

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*Language is dynamic; it grows, changes and develops. Language also creates and expresses meaning. This is particularly true with the language of diversity and terms (labels) we use to identify ourselves. Language must not demean, exclude or offend. We must allow others to self-identify, for definitions of terms vary for everyone. The following definitions are given to provide a starting point for discussion and understanding.*

***Please Note:*** *It is important to respect people's desired self-identifications. One should never assume another person's identity based on that person's appearance. It is always best to ask people how they identify, including what pronouns they prefer, and to respect their wishes.*

**LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQA, LGBTQAI, LGBTQQAI, TBLG:** These acronyms refer to Lesbian, Gay, bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Ally, Intersex, and Questioning. Although all of the different identities within "LGBT" are often lumped together (and share sexism as a common root of oppression), there are specific needs and concerns related to each individual identity.

**Advocate:** A person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support LGBTQ issues, concerns, and equal rights legislation.

**Ally:** Someone who advocates for and supports members of a community other than their own. Reaching across differences to achieve mutual goals.

**Androgyny:** Exhibiting the identity and/or appearance of both male and female, as neither male nor female, or as between male and female; exhibiting behaviors of either or both traditional genders; a descriptive term that many in the LGBTQ community find offensive.

**Anti-gay Violence:** Bias-related violence and crimes committed against lesbians and gay males; includes physical assault, abuse, rape, vandalism, terrorism, and murder. (Such crimes are now reportable under federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act.)

**Asexual:** a sexual orientation describing individuals who do not experience sexual attraction.

**Bias:** Prejudice; an inclinations or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

**Biological Sex:** A scientific system of categorizing some animals based on chromosomal structure, reproductive organs, or reproductive function. Usually, biological sex is assumed to be binaristic (male/female).

**Biphobia:** The irrational fear of, hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against bisexual people. There is often biphobia in lesbian, gay, and transgender communities, as well in heterosexual communities.

**Bisexual:** a person who has significant romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions to members of both sexes. The frequency, intensity, or quality of attraction is not necessarily directed toward both sexes equally.

**Camp:** A form of humor in which one makes fun of one's oppression by taking on and exaggerating stereotypes which the oppressor projects onto the oppressed. Camp makes fun of stereotypes and laughs at the sting of oppression.

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity and expression matches the gender identity typically associated with their biological sex. For example, a female who identifies as a woman.

**Civil Union:** A commitment between life partners of the same sex. Partners have all the same legal protections, rights and responsibilities as male-female married couples.

**Coming Out:** Coming out is the process of first recognizing and acknowledging a non-heterosexual orientation and then disclosing it to others. This usually occurs in stages and is a non-linear process. An individual may be out in some situations or to certain family members or associates and not others. Some may never come out to anyone beside themselves. The term is usually applied to members of the LGBT community, but heterosexual people can experience a similar process of coming to terms with their sexual orientation and/or their identity as an ally.

**Cross-dressers:** Men and women who enjoy wearing the clothes of and appearing as the other gender. A cross-dresser generally wants to relate, and be accepted, as a person of the gender he/she is presenting. While many are heterosexual, the use of cross-dressing in the gay drag culture is well-documented.

**Discrimination:** The act of showing partiality or prejudice; a prejudicial act.

**Domestic Partners:** Adults who are not legally married, but who share resources and responsibilities for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. Definitions may vary among city ordinances, corporate policies, and even among those who identify themselves as domestic partners.

**Dominant Culture:** The cultural values, beliefs, and practices that are assumed to be the most common and influential.

**Drag:** The act of dressing in gendered clothing as part of a performance. Drag Queens perform in highly feminine attire. Drag Kings perform in highly masculine attire. Drag may be performed as a political comment on gender, as parody, or simply as entertainment. Drag performance does not indicate sexuality, gender identity, or sex identity.

**Dyke:** although once used negatively, this term has been reclaimed by some in the LGBT community to refer to lesbian or bisexual women.

**Faggot:** A pejorative term and common homophobic slur against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. The word has been used in English since the late 16th century to mean "old or unpleasant woman," and the modern use may derive from this.

**Family:** Two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. The family is that climate that one comes home to; and it is that network of sharing and commitments

that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, or adoption, or marriage (American Home Economics Association).

**“Family”:** Colloquial term used to identify other LGBTQ community members. For example, an LGBTQ person saying, “that person is family” often means that the person they are referring to is LGBTQ as well.

**Family of Choice (chosen family):** Persons or group of people an individual sees as significant in his or her life. It may include none, all, or some members of his or her family or origin. In addition, it may include individuals such as significant others, domestic partners, friends, and coworkers.

**Family of Origin:** Biological family in which one was raised. May or may not be a part of a person’s support system.

**Feminine:** The socially-constructed gender role assigned to females. Generally includes: nurturing, emotional, quiet, artistic, and attentive to appearance.

**FTM:** female-to-male. Indicates a transgendered individual who was originally assigned the gender of female at birth, but has claimed a male identity through clothing, surgery, or attitude changes.

**Gay:** a man whose primary romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions are to other men. This term can also be used to apply to lesbians, bisexuals, and on some occasions, be used as an umbrella term for all LGBT people. Some people object to the use of gay when applied to lesbians as well as gay men, and use the word only to mean a homosexual male.

**Gender: 1)** A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. Gender characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures. Words that refer to gender include: man, woman, transgender, masculine, feminine, and gender queer. **2)** One’s sense of self as masculine or feminine regardless of external genitalia. Gender is often conflated with sex. This is inaccurate because sex refers to bodies and gender refers to personality characteristics.

**Genderism:** Holding people to traditional expectations based on gender, or punishing, or excluding those who don’t conform to traditional gender expressions.

**Gender Bending:** Now considered a defamatory statement. Dressing in such a way as to question the traditional feminine or masculine qualities assigned to articles of clothing or adornment. Gender bending may be part of fashion, or possibly a political statement.

**Gender Conformity:** When your gender identity and sex “match” (i.e. fit social norms). For example, a male who is masculine and identifies as a man.

**Gender Dysphoria:** A psychological term used to describe the feelings of pain and anguish that arise from a transgender person’s conflict between gender identity (internal experience) and biological sex (external experience).

**Gender Expression:** Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice and emphasizing, de-

emphasizing or changing their body's characteristics. Gender expression is not necessarily an indication of sexual orientation.

**Gender Identity:** The sense of “being” male or “being” female. For some people, gender identity is in accord with physical anatomy. For transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are not necessarily linked.

**Gender Identity Disorder (GID):** The psychological classification found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) which is used to diagnose trans people and children. GID is frequently, abusively and inappropriately used with children to cure homosexuality and enforce gender conformity. There is a current movement to have this diagnosis removed from the DSM-IV as trans people consider the label of mental illness as an incorrect assessment of their situation.

**Gender-Neutral:** Nondiscriminatory language to describe relationships-e.g. “spouse” and “partner” are gender-neutral alternatives to the gender-specific words “husband”, “wife”, “boyfriend”, and “girlfriend”.

**Gender queer: 1)** A person whose performance of gender is not normative in relation to what is socially expected. This term became popular as increasing amounts of gender variant people voiced discomfort in and exclusion from the transgender community. **2)** A rejection of the gender binary (male/female) in favor of a more fluid, nontraditional identity.

**Gender role:** How “masculine” or “feminine” an individual acts. Societies commonly have norms regarding how males and females should behave, expecting people to have personality characteristics and/or act a certain way based on their biological sex.

**Gender-variant/Gender non-conforming:** Displaying gender traits that are not normatively associated with their biological sex. “Feminine” behavior or appearance in a male is gender-variant as is “masculine” behavior or appearance in a female. Gender-variant behavior is culturally specific.

**Hate Crime:** Hate crime legislations often defines a hate crime as a crime motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.

**Heteronormativity:** An (often subconscious) assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and the attitudes associated with that assumption. Heterocentrism often shows up in unintentional ways in everyday life.

**Heterosexism: 1)** The system of oppression that reinforces the belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships, thereby negating gays', lesbians', and bisexuals' lives and relationships. **2)** Assuming every person to be heterosexual therefore marginalizing persons who do not identify as heterosexual.

**Heterosexual:** A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted and committed to the members or a gender or sex that is seen to be the “opposite” or other than the one with which they identify or are identified. Also called “straight”.

**Heterosexual Privilege/Heteronormativity:** The societal assumption and norm that all people are heterosexual. The basic civil rights and social privileges that a heterosexual person automatically receives, that are systematically denied to gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons, simply because of their sexual orientation.

**Homophobia:** The irrational fear of, hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behavior. Biphobia and transphobia are more specific terms when discussing prejudice toward bisexual and transgender persons, respectively.

**Homosexual:** A person who is primarily and/or exclusively attracted to members of what they identify as their own sex or gender. A clinical term that originated in the 1800s. Some avoid the word because it contains the base word “sex”. The terms “lesbian, bi, and gay” are preferred by many in the LGBT community.

**Homosexuality:** defines attraction (sexually, physically, and emotionally) to the same sex, and is one orientation on the continuum from homosexual to bisexual to heterosexual. Many prefer the terms “gay”, “lesbian”, or “bisexual” to describe their identities.

**In the closet/Closeted:** Keeping one’s sexual orientation and/or gender or sex identity a secret.

**Inclusive Language:** Use of gender non-specific language to avoid imposing the limiting assumption of heterosexuality and to present an open social climate for non-heterosexual, transgender, and intersex people.

**Institutional Oppression:** Arrangement of society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc.

**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.

**Internalized Oppression:** The process by which, an oppressed person comes to believe, accept, or live out the inaccurate stereotypes and misinformation about their group.

**Intersex:** Formerly known as hermaphrodites (a term that is now considered offensive), this term refers to people who have traits of both male and female sexual organs or have ambiguous sexual organs. Intersex people are born with “sex chromosomes,” external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered “standard” for either male or female.

**Invisible minority (also called silent minority):** A group whose minority status is not always immediately visible, such as some disabled people and LGBTQ people. This lack of visibility may make organizing for rights difficult.

**Lambda:** The Gay Activist Alliance originally chose the lambda, the Greek letter “L”, as a symbol in 1970. Organizers chose the letter “L” to signify liberation. The word has become a way of expressing the concept “Lesbian and gay male” in a minimum of syllables and has been adopted by such organizations as Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

**Lavender:** The association of the color lavender with gay and lesbian people goes back into ancient times and has been strengthened by the fact that lavender, or purple, is the combination of red (pink) and blue, the traditional gender-identified colors.

**Legal Sex:** The sex assigned on an individual's legal documentation.

**Lesbian:** a woman whose primary romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions are to other women.

**Lifestyle:** How a person chooses to live and behave. Being LGBTQ is not a choice, and therefore is not considered a lifestyle (some lifestyles include: vegan, hobbies, rural/urban, etc.)

**Marginalized:** Excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.

**Masculine:** The socially-constructed gender role assigned to males. Generally includes: strong, stoic, good at sports, wears pants, and does not wear makeup.

**Men who have sex with Men (MSM):** Men who engage in same-sex behavior, but who may not necessarily self-identify as gay.

**Monosexual:** One who has significant sexual or romantic attractions to only members of one gender or sex. Refers to those who are straight, gay, or lesbians, not bisexual or asexual. Often regarded as derogatory.

**MTF:** male-to-female. Indicates a transgendered individual who was originally assigned the gender of male at birth, but has claimed a female identity through clothing, surgery, or attitude changes.

**Normal:** Can refer to what is statistically more common, but is often confused with whatever people condone morally. Only individuals can decide what is normal for them, and it need not be what is normal for others.

**On T:** When an FTM takes the hormone testosterone.

**Oppress:** To participate in or collude with the oppression of a group.

**Oppression:** Systematic, institutionalized mistreatment of and misinformation about people who are (perceived to be) members of a particular group. Oppression is always backed up by social norms and cultural power. Mistreatment may include economic marginalization, social marginalization (not including members of the group in one's circle of friends and media reports on and representations of society; the cold shoulder; not consulting with or accepting input from them on decisions which concern them; snide comments, verbal harassment, assault, rape, and murder), legal marginalization, medical marginalization, educational marginalization, etc.

**Othering:** Language that refers to them or –others; typically used to identify a separation between and among groups. It has been used in social sciences to understand the processes by which societies and groups exclude 'Others' whom they want to subordinate or who do not fit into their society.

**Out or Out of the closet:** Refers to varying degrees of being open about one's sexual orientation and/or sex identity or gender identity.

**Outing:** Outing refers to revealing someone else's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without the consent of the person.

**Pansexual: 1)** Characterized by the potential for aesthetic attraction, romantic love, or sexual desire for people, regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. **2)** A person who is fluid in sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Partner or Significant Other:** Primary domestic partner or spousal relationship(s). May be referred to as girlfriend/boyfriend, lover, roommate, life partner, wife/husband, or other terms.

**Pass:** To be perceived by others as a member of the group one chooses, instead of as a member of another group, especially of the gender one was assigned at birth.

**Polyamory:** Polyamory is the practice of having multiple open, honest love relationships.

**Pride:** Not being ashamed of oneself; showing one's pride to others by coming out, marching, etc.

**Queer: 1)** Used by some within the LGBT community to refer to a person who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex or transgender, or someone who is supportive of LGBT issues. **2)** A political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid. **3)** A simple label to explain a complex set of sexual behaviors and desires. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer. *\*\*Many are offended by this word and view it as a pejorative, but it is currently being reclaimed by many within the LGBT community and used as a statement of empowerment. Some people identify as "queer" to distance themselves from the rigid categorization of "straight" and "gay". Some transgender, lesbian, gay, questioning, non-labeling, intersex, and bisexual people, however, reject the use of the term due to its connotations of deviance and its tendency to gloss over and sometimes deny the differences between these groups.\*\**

**Questioning:** The process of exploring one's own sexual identity. Looking into the influences that shape one's sexual identity, including but not limited to one's upbringing, expectations from others (family, friends, church, etc.), and inner motivation.

**Rainbow Flag:** The Rainbow Freedom Flag was designed in 1978 by Gilbert Baker to designate the great diversity of the LGBTQ community. It has been recognized by the International Flag Makers Association as the official flag of the LGBTQ civil rights movement and has been adopted as a symbol of gay identity and pride. It has six stripes in the traditional form, but can be seen as streamers, etc., which run in the order of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and purple.

**Safe Space:** A place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age,

or physical or mental ability; a place where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly encourages everyone to respect others.

**Sex:** **1)** An act, series of acts, that humans do as a part of the expression of their sexual nature and their desire for love and affection. **2)** The identification of biological gender. *\*\*Sex is biological, although social views and experiences of sex are cultural\*\**

**Sex Identity:** The sex that a person sees themselves as. This can include refusing to label oneself with a sex.

**Sexual Dysphoria:** A medical term for unhappiness or discomfort with the biological sex to which one was born or assigned at birth; describing a disconnect between one's internal sense of gender indemnity and one's outwardly apparent biological sex; a term disliked by many transgender people as implying that there is something wrong with them; may or may not coincide with gender dysphoria.

**Sexual Minority:** **1)** Refers to members of sexual orientations or who engage in sexual activities that are not part of the mainstream. **2)** Refers to members of sex groups that do not fall into the majority categories of male or female, such as intersexuals and transsexuals.

**Sexual Orientation:** The inclination or capacity to develop intimate emotional and sexual relationships with people of the same sex, the other sex, or either sex. One's sexual orientation therefore may be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual. Orientation is not dependent on physical experience, but rather on a person's feelings and attractions. *\*\*It is on a continuum and not a set of absolute categories. Sometimes referred to as affection orientation or sexuality. Sexual orientation evolves through a multistage development process, and may change over time\*\**

**SRS (Sexual Reassignment Surgery):** The surgery done by transsexuals to make their bodies and their sex identity match.

**Stereotype:** An exaggerated oversimplified belief about an entire group of people without regard for individual difference.

**Stonewall:** On June, 28 1969, NYC police attempted a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn, a working class gay and lesbian bar in Greenwich Village. Unexpectedly, the patrons resisted, and the incident escalated into a riot that continued for several days. Most people look to this event as the beginning of the American Gay Liberation movement and all subsequent LGBT movements.

**Straight:** Person who is attracted to a gender other than their own, Commonly thought of as attraction to the opposite gender, but since there are not only two genders (see transgender), this definition is inaccurate.

**Transgender:** **1)** Used both as an umbrella term and as an identity. Broadly, it refers to those who do not identify or are uncomfortable with their assigned gender and gender roles. As an identity the term refers to anyone who transgresses traditional sex and gender categories. **2)** People whose psychological self (gender identity) differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with. For example, a female with a masculine gender identity or who identifies as a man.

**Transgenderist:** A person who lives full time, or most of the time, in a gender role different than the role associated with their biological or chromosomal sex (a gender non-conformist), but who has not made any anatomical changes.

**Transition: 1)** The time period when a transgender individual shifts from expressing one gender to another in her/his personal life and workplace; involves several elements such as alternate dress, hormone therapy, voice training, and possibly surgery. For most individuals, the workplace transition is carefully planned; the planning will often include appropriate levels of management in the discussion, and the transition process may be weeks or months in length. The personal life transition may be more sudden. **2)** A complicated, multi-step process that can take years as transsexuals align their anatomy with their sex identity; this process may include sex reassignment surgery (SRS).

**Transphobia:** The irrational fear of, hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against transgender people.

**Transsexual:** Refers to a person who experiences a mismatch of the sex they were born as and the sex they identify as. A transsexual sometimes undergoes medical treatment to change his/her physical sex to match his/her sex identity through hormone treatments and/or surgically. Not all transsexuals can have or desire surgery.

**Transvestite:** A person who chooses to dress in the sex-role clothing of the other gender. Some believe that, unlike cross-dressers, transvestites have a genuine emotional need to cross-dress. Transvestites are generally heterosexual, married, and well educated. Transvestites are usually comfortable with their anatomy and do not wish to change it (i.e. they are not transsexuals).

**Triangle:** A symbol of remembrance. Gay men in the Nazi concentration camps were forced to wear the pink triangle as a designation of being homosexual. Women who did not conform to social roles, often believed to be lesbians, had to wear the black triangle. The triangles are worn today as symbols of freedom, reminding us to never forget.

**Two-Spirited (also called Berdaches or third gender):** In many Native American Cultures some individuals are respected and looked upon as people who are both male and female, making them more complete, more balanced than those who identify as men or women. Before those from Europe came from across the waters, and took over native land, these people were part of the “norm”, connected with the very heartbeat of the life force we are all a part of. Even today, Berdaches are accepted in many Native American societies and other settings.

**Unisex:** Clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc., which considered appropriate for members of any gender/sex.

**Ze:** Gender neutral pronouns that be used instead of he/she.

**Zir:** Gender neutral pronouns that be used instead of his/her.

**Some definitions adapted from:** *Outfront Minnesota, 310 38th Street East, Suite 204, Minneapolis, MN 55409, Cooper Thompson and the Campaign to End Homophobia: A Guide to*

# Actions to Challenge Heterosexism and Homophobia on Campus

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## **Educate Yourself**

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

## **Model non-heterosexist or Non-homophobic Behavior and Attitudes**

- Take pride in your same-sex relationship
- Use inclusive language like partner or date rather than boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife
- Make friends with and get close to LGBT people
- Don't make assumptions about others' sexual orientation or sex
- Don't assume that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is only about being sexual
- Don't assume gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people don't have, like, or want children
- Keep information you have about others' sexual orientations/identity confidential
- Use the same standards for same sex affection in public that you use for opposite sex affection

## **Create an Inclusive Culture and a Welcoming Environment**

- Assume that some people in your residence hall, classes, groups, and/or campus community are LGBT
- Assume that closeted LGBT people in your residence hall, classes, groups, and/or campus community are wondering how safe the environment is for them; provide safety by making it clear you accept and support all people
- Put up bulletin boards displays that include same sex couples or references to LGBT lives and people
- Post fliers announcing events of interest to LGBT people; remember there is a heterosexual assumption, so actively advertise that LGBT people are welcome (especially at parties and dances)
- Find out about and share resources and information on gay-affirmative service providers, events, bookstores, bars, etc.

- Say the words “gay”, “lesbian”, “bisexual”, and “transgender” out loud; be aware that there may be LGBT people around you, even if none are “out of the closet”

### **Educate Others**

- Sponsor a workshop on homophobia
- Sponsor a LGBT speakers bureau program
- Sponsor films like Pink Triangle, Times of Harvey Milk, Before Stonewall, Personal Best, Parting Glances, Desert of Hearts, etc.
- Set up bulletin board displays on LGBT issues/culture/people
- Have informal discussions where you live, go to school, work, and/or with groups of friends
- Offer alternatives, accurate information, etc., when you hear homophobic stereotypes or myths
- Write articles for a newspaper on LGBT issues, write letters to the editor

### **Confront Over Incidents**

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

### **Take a Public Stand**

- Wear a button such as “I support gay rights” or “How dare you presume I’m heterosexual?”
- Attend rally or march supporting LGBT people; write a letter to the school paper
- Sign a petition supporting gay rights
- Promote LGBT nondiscrimination policies
- Campaign to pass gay rights bills
- Form a support/activist group for heterosexual allies
- Organize to get more resources on your campus: an office for LGBT concerns; lesbian and gay studies courses/programs; pro-lesbian/gay counselors; LGBT speakers/cultural events, etc.

*Adapted from **Diversity Works** 201 N. Valley RD. Pelham, MA 01002 (413)-256-1868*

# Understanding Homophobia

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Definition of Homophobia: an irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexual people or perceived homosexual behavior. It may be experienced by heterosexual and well as LGBT people.

Homophobia can manifest in various ways:

#### PERSONAL OR INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA

Self-hatred by a homosexual person about their own sexuality. The person believes that feelings of attraction to the same sex are bad, sinful, immoral or repugnant. For the heterosexual person this may manifest as the fear of being perceived by others as homosexual and results in trying to “prove” their heterosexuality.

#### INTERPERSONAL HOMOPHOBIA

Usually results in the expression of hatred or dislike of others who are thought to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. This may be expressed explicitly through behavior ranging from name calling to homicide, or implicitly for example through jokes that put down SSA people. Given the social dominance of heterosexuality, some level of internal conflict will occur before a SSA individual moves towards acceptance.

#### INSTITUTIONAL HOMOPHOBIA

Fear of homosexuality in our society is evident as discrimination. Governments, corporate structures, churches and other institutions and organizations discriminate against SSA young people in a variety of ways. Explicit examples of this are policies and legislation that prevents homosexuals from marrying or not being regarded as the next of kin for a dying partner, or superannuation not going to the surviving same sex partner. Official data collection that ignores sexual orientation as a category is a more subtle form of institutional homophobia.

#### CULTURAL HOMOPHOBIA

Societal norms that imply that heterosexuality is “better” and that everyone is or should be heterosexual. The media perpetuates heterosexuality as the norm by not reporting or representing the homosexual view, for example through television, where most characters are or are assumed to be heterosexual.

Adapted from *Not Round Here: Affirming Diversity, Challenging Homophobia Rural Service Providers Training Manual*, by Kenton Penley Miller and Mahamati, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2000.

### **Levels of Homophobia**

*Negative*

*Positive*

**Repulsion Pity Tolerance Acceptance Support Admiration Appreciation Nurturance**



## Negative Levels

Repulsion: Homosexuality is seen as “a crime against nature.” Homosexual people are sick, crazy, sinful, immoral, wicked, etc. Anything is justified to change them, ie: prison, hospitalization, behavior therapy, from therapy to shock treatment

Pity: Heterosexual chauvinism. Heterosexuality is more mature and certainly to be preferred. Any possibility of being straight should be reinforced and those who seem to be “born that way” should be pitied.

Tolerance: Homosexuality is just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and “grow out of.” Thus lesbians, gays and bisexuals are less mature than heterosexual people and should not be put in positions of authority because they are still working on adolescent behaviors.

Acceptance: Still implies that there is something that must be accepted. Characterized by such statements as “you’re not gay to me, you’re just a person.” Denies the social and legal realities, while ignoring the pain of invisibility and the stress of closeted behavior.

## Positive Levels

Support: work to safeguard the rights of LGBT people. May be uncomfortable themselves, but are aware of the social climate and irrational unfairness.

Admiration: Acknowledges that being LGBT in our society takes strength. Such people are willing to truly look at themselves and work on their own homophobic attitudes.

Appreciation: Values the diversity of people and sees LGBT people as a valid part of diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia in themselves and others.

Nurturance: Assumes that LGBT people are indispensable to society. They view all homosexual people with genuine affection and delight and are willing to be open and public advocates.

Source: Obear, K. (1985) Opening Doors to Understanding and Acceptance: Facilitators Personal Assessment of Homophobia

# Homophobia Assessment

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*Answer Yes or No to the following questions:*

Do you stop yourself from doing or saying certain things because someone might think your LGBT?

Do you ever intentionally do or say things so that people will think you are NOT LGBT?

Do you believe that LGBT individuals can influence others to become homosexual?

Are you afraid that someone could influence you to become LGBT?

Do you feel that LGBT people should be able to have and raise children?

Do you think that there are specific jobs, positions, or professions that LGBT people should be barred from working in?

Would you go to a doctor who you believed to be LGBT if they were the same sex as you?

Would you go to a doctor who you believed to be LGBT if they were a different sex than you?

If someone you care about were to say to you, "I think I might be gay," would you suggest they see a therapist?

Have you ever been to a gay bar or social club?

Have you ever been to a gay pride festival or march?

Do you think LGBT people should be able to marry their partners?

Have you ever laughed at a "gay" joke?

Would you wear a shirt that says "How dare you presume I am heterosexual?"?

Would you be offended if someone thought you were lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender?

- Adapted from A. Elfin Moses and Robert O. Hawkins Jr.

## Religion and Sexual Orientation

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Religion has been a source of both comfort and suffering for many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. While most LGBT people have been raised in an organized religion — and many continue to cherish their faith community — too many have been forced to leave those communities behind because of condemnation of gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

In recent years, a growing number of organized religious groups in the United States have issued statements officially welcoming gay, lesbian and bisexual people as members; most still do not address transgender people.

Recently the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) announced that it would allow churches to decide if they would like to have a clergy member who openly identifies as lesbian or gay. The ELCA also voted in favor of allowing churches to determine if the past would be able to perform same-sex commitment ceremonies. This announcement spawned much discussion and support from both sides of the aisle.

To find information about the stands that different religious organizations have taken with regard to LGBT parishioners, same-sex unions, openly gay clergy, and other relevant issues of today, visit the Human Rights Campaign's website at [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org).

### **Christianity and Homosexuality**

Several passages in the Christian Bible have often been cited as providing evidence that homosexuality is a sin and LGBT people are to be condemned. However, as a historical document, the Bible should be considered in the context in which it was written. A growing number of biblical scholars, theologians and clergy argue that such conclusions about gay and lesbian people cannot be drawn from the Bible because:

- At the time the Bible was written, no words existed for the concepts “gay,” “lesbian,” “homosexual”;
- Committed gay and lesbian couples did not exist, as they do today; and
- Little was said about same-sex relations and Jesus said nothing on the subject.

*Sources: Human Rights Campaign, [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org), and “What Does the Christian Bible Say?” by Frank Jernigan, GLBSB Newsletter, 3-4 (1992).*

### **Judaism and Homosexuality**

While more liberal Jewish congregations have been affirming and ordaining LGBT rabbis, this stance has not been universal. Within the Conservative Jewish movement, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Jews do not yet have full equality.

Keshet Congregations is an organization of Conservative-movement-affiliated congregations and individual congregants in the Conservative Movement who believe that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Jews should have equal rights in congregations, be able to fully participate in positions of professional and lay leadership, and be ordained as rabbis and cantors through Conservative movement institutions.

The immediate focus of this organization is on generating congregational activism that supports the movement to ordain LGBT Jews as rabbis and cantors. Keshet rabbis have spoken out in favor of LGBT ordination, saying:

Keshet-Rabbis hold that GLBT Jews should be embraced as full, open members of all Conservative/Masorti congregations and institutions.

Through our understanding of Jewish sources and Jewish values, we affirm that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Jews may fully participate in community life and achieve positions of professional and lay leadership. ([www.keshetrabbis.org](http://www.keshetrabbis.org))

Sources: Keshet Congregations, [www.keshetcongregations.org](http://www.keshetcongregations.org) and [www.keshetrabbis.org](http://www.keshetrabbis.org)

### **Islam and Homosexuality**

Islam is a religion that is widely misunderstood in today's world. As with the Christian and Jewish faith traditions, there is no consensus in the Muslim world about how inclusive they should be to LGBT Muslims. However, Al-Fatiha, a US-based organization dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (LGBTIQ), has been working on this issue since 1998. Al-Fatiha's mission is to support, empower and advocate on behalf of LGBTIQ Muslims and to promote progressive Islamic notions of peace and social justice.

Sources: Human Rights Coalition, [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org), and Al-Fatiha, [www.al-fatiha.org](http://www.al-fatiha.org)

### **Recommended Readings**

*The New Testament and Homosexuality*, by Scroggs

*Uncommon Heroes*, by Phillip Sherman

*Those People at that Church – The St. Francis Lutheran Cookbook*, by Wayne A. Strei

*Stranger at the Gate – To Be Gay and Christian in America*, by Rev. Mel White

*Jesus Acted Up – A Gay and Lesbian Manifesto*, by Robert Goss

*We Were Baptised, Too – Claiming God's Grace for Lesbians and Gays*, by M. B. Alexander & J. Preston

Adapted from: [www.ndsu.edu/safezone](http://www.ndsu.edu/safezone)

# Being an Ally

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## **Definition of an Ally**

An ally is an individual who works to end oppression personally and professionally through support and advocacy of an oppressed population<sup>1</sup>, in this context gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Allies may be prompted to action because they are alarmed at the pervasive negative attitudes towards GLBT people in a heterosexist society. Although the term ally is most often used to refer to heterosexual allies, GLBT individuals who actively support the needs of their community are also allies. Ally development occurs in stages, a process that will be disclosed in this manual as well as during training.

### **Ideal Qualities of an Ally<sup>2</sup>**

An Ally:

- Has worked to develop an understanding of GLBT people and their needs.
- Chooses to align with lesbians, gays, and bisexuals and responds to their needs.
- Believes that it is in her/his self-interest to be an ally.
- Is committed to the personal growth (in spite of the probability of discomfort and possible pain) required.
- Is quick to take pride in personal success in responding to homophobia and overcoming fears.
- Expects support from other allies.
- Is able to acknowledge and articulate how patterns of fear have operated in his/her lives.
- Expects to make some mistakes but does not use it as an excuse for non-action.
- Knows that both sides of an ally relationship have a clear responsibility for their own response to the oppression whether or not persons on the other side choose to respond.
- Knows that in the most empowered ally relationships, the persons in the non-oppressed role initiate the change toward personal, institutional, and societal justice and equality.
- Knows that he/she is responsible for humanizing or empowering their role in society, particularly as their role relates to responding to homophobia.
- Promotes a sense of community with lesbians, gay, and bisexual people and teaches others about the importance of outreach.

### **Benefits of Being an Ally<sup>3</sup>**

- You open yourself up to the possibility of close relationships with a significant portion of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: *Safe on Campus*. (n.d.). [Manual]. Western Michigan University

<sup>2</sup> Source: Condensed from N.J. Evans & V. Wall, 1991 <http://www.gvsu.edu/allies/ideal-qualities-19.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Condensed from N.J. Evans & V. Wall, 1991 <http://www.gvsu.edu/allies/ideal-qualities-19.htm>

- You have an opportunity to be a part of the GLBT movement for equality.
- You become less likely to stereotype according to sex roles.
- You may increase your ability to have close and loving relationships with same-sex friends.
- You have opportunities to learn from, teach, and have an impact on a population with whom you might not have otherwise interacted with.
- You may be the reason an individual finally decides that his or her life is worth something.

## Ally Development

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### AWARENESS

It is important to become more aware of who you are and how you are different from and similar to GLBT people.

Strategies to do this include:

1. Conversations with GLBT people.
2. Attending awareness-building workshops.
3. Reading about the GLBT culture
4. Self-examination

### KNOWLEDGE/EDUCATION

You must begin to acquire knowledge about sexual orientation and what the experience is for GLBT people in society and within the campus community.

You can do this by:

1. Learning about laws, policies, and practices and how they affect GLBT people.
2. Educating yourself about the GLBT culture and norms in this community.
3. Contacting local and national GLBT organizations for information.

### SKILLS

You must develop skills in communicating the knowledge that you have learned.

You can do this by:

1. Attending workshops.
2. Role playing situations with friends.
3. Developing support connections.

### ACTION

Action is, without a doubt, the only way you can affect change in the society as a whole; for, if you keep your awareness, knowledge, and skills to yourself, you are in danger of becoming counteractive to all of the work you have done towards becoming an ally.

### **Stages of Being an Ally: Beyond Tolerance: Moving Toward Understanding, Appreciation, and Celebration**<sup>4</sup>

**Actively supporting homophobic oppression.** This stage of response includes actions

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Issues in Counseling of Alabama (<http://www.aglbical.org/2A%20ALLIES.htm>). And from Safe Zone Resource Guide, Florida State University. (Model originally developed by James Washington, 1991).

that directly support lesbian/gay and gender presentation oppression. These actions include laughing at or telling jokes that put down LGBT people, making fun of people who don't fit the traditional stereotypes of what is masculine or feminine, discouraging others and avoiding personal behavior that is not sex-stereotyped, and engaging in verbal or physical harassment of lesbians, gays, or heterosexuals who do not conform to traditional sex-role behavior. It also includes working for anti-gay legislation.

**Denying or ignoring.** This stage of response includes inaction that supports lesbian, gay, or bisexual, or gender presentation oppression coupled with an unwillingness or inability to understand the effects of homophobic and heterosexist actions. This stage is characterized by a "business as usual" attitude. Though responses in this stage are not actively and directly homophobic or heterosexist, the passive acceptance of these actions by others serves to support the system of oppression.

**Recognizing, but no action.** This stage of response is characterized by a recognition of homophobic or heterosexist actions and the harmful effects of these actions. However, this recognition does not result in the action to interrupt the homophobic or heterosexist situation. Taking action is prevented by homophobia or a lack of knowledge about specific actions to take. This stage of response is accompanied by discomfort due to the lack of congruence between recognizing homophobia or heterosexism yet failing to act on this recognition. An example of this stage of response is a person hearing a friend tell a "queer joke", recognizing that is homophobic, not laughing at the joke, but saying nothing to the friend about the joke.

**Recognizing and interrupting.** This stage of response includes not only recognizing homophobic and heterosexist actions, but also taking action to stop them. Though the response goes no further than stopping, this stage is often an important transition from passively accepting homophobic or heterosexist actions to actively choosing anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist actions. In this stage a person hearing a "queer joke" would not laugh and would tell the joke teller that jokes that put down any minority, including gays, are not funny. Another example would be a person who realized that s/he is avoiding an activity because others might think s/he is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender if s/he participates in it, and then decides to participate.

**Educating self.** This stage of response includes taking action to learn more about LGBT people, heterosexism and homophobia. These actions can include reading books attending workshops, talking to others, joining organizations, and listening to lesbian or gay music, or any other actions that can increase awareness and knowledge. This stage is also a prerequisite for the last three stages. All three involve interactions with others about homophobia and heterosexism. In order to do this confidently and comfortably, people need to first learn more.

**Questioning and Dialoguing.** This stage of response is an attempt to begin educating others about homophobia and heterosexism. These stages go beyond interrupting homophobic and heterosexist interactions to engage people in dialogue about these issues. Through the use of questions, and dialogue, this response attempts to help others increase their awareness of and knowledge about homophobia and heterosexism.

**Supporting and Encouraging.** This stage of response includes actions that support and encourage the anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist actions of others. Overcoming the homophobia that keeps people from interrupting this form of oppression even when they are offended by it is difficult. Supporting and encouraging others who are able to take this risk is an important part of reinforcing anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist behavior.

**Initiating and Preventing.** This stage of response includes actions that actively anticipate and identify homophobic institutionalized practices or individual actions and work to change them. Examples include teachers changing a “Family Life” curriculum that is homophobic or heterosexist, or counselors’ inviting a speaker to come and discuss how homophobia can affect counselor-client interactions.

**Transtheoretical model of change toward becoming an effective ally<sup>5</sup>**

Tyler, Jackman-Wheitner, Strader, & Lenox (1997) proposed another model of change with regard to GLBT issues, called the Transtheoretical Model of Change. It is helpful when working with colleagues and students to keep in mind this process of change.

<b>Characteristics of Individuals at Each Stage of the Transtheoretical Model of Change</b>				
	<b>Pre-Contemplation</b>	<b>Contemplation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Maintenance</b>
<b>Statements</b>	“It’s fine with me if someone is gay. I don’t understand the need to talk about GLBT issues.”	“I guess I treat GLBT people differently than I do straight people.”	“I’m going to change the way I’ve done things in the past.”	“I’m glad I’ve made changes to become more supportive of GLBT people.”
<b>Thoughts</b>	People are people.	GLBT people have been treated unfairly in the past.	GLBT people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.	My life is enriched by my relationships and the contributions made by GLBT individuals.
<b>Feelings</b>	Confusion about the need to discuss or receive training.	Embarrassed and ashamed about past statements or behavior.	Excited about new attitudes and experiences. Fear about other’s reactions.	Pride in personal accomplishment and efforts to be an ally.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Grand Valley State University Advocates and Allies page, <http://www.gvsu.edu/allies/transtheoretical-model-of-change-2.htm>; original source K. Poynter, Western Michigan University

<b>Behavior</b>	No extended contact or association with GLBT individuals. Has never attended GLBT oriented activities.	Seeking out opportunities to expand knowledge or gain new perspectives.	Choosing to more closely affiliate with GLBT individuals and deepening relationships.	Nurturing relationships with GLBT individuals. Attending ally support groups and other GLBT activities.
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### **Strategies for Being an Effective Ally<sup>6</sup>**

Challenging attitudes and institutional practices that curtail the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students requires verbal tactics and strategies of intervention and interruption. Teachable moments abound in the area of GLBT concerns because the general public is usually quite open about its anti-gay sentiments.

The following items are meant only as guides to how you might begin to be more inclusive of GLBT people, communities, issues, and concerns in your personal and institutional life.

- Understand that heterosexism and homophobia affect all of us and that one must work on ridding oneself of it- even if one is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Heterosexism and homophobia are also experienced cross-culturally.
- Assume that in any group there are GLBT people present. Use language that is inclusive and avoid using language that speaks to people as if heterosexuality and its institutions were the only choices. Also avoid the notion that homosexuality is a European invention. Accept that GLBT people are part of the multicultural mosaic.
- In professional interactions with peers, students, professionals, and others, take an anti-heterosexist stance. Make it known that you support, as the institution, the rights of GLBT people to express their identity openly if they choose.
- After assessing the risks, challenge and interrupt homophobic and heterosexist remarks and behaviors. Take an educational approach. Ask for clarification. Question.
- Continue to educate yourself about sexual diversity, homophobia, and heterosexism as well as their cultural, social, and political implications- e.g. attend campus programs, see the films and TV shows, visit GLBT bookstores, read articles, and interact with GLBT students and colleagues.
- Use the terms “gay”, “lesbian”, “bisexual”, or “transgender” and refrain as much as possible from using the term “homosexual” in reference to GLBT people.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Adapted from 365-Day Odyssey through Sexual Orientation Handbook by J. Acton of Ball State University and J. Workman of Ferris State University . Unpublished.

- If you are heterosexual, learn (by doing) not to become defensive or distracted from your anti-heterosexist stance at work when people “accuse” you of being gay or lesbian simply because you have taken a pro-gay stance. If you a GLBT person but are not out in your professional role, try not to let fears of exposure prevent you from taking an anti-heterosexist stance.
- Accept that bisexuality is a viable sexuality and lifestyle rather than the posture of a confused person or a person who is rejecting a gay or lesbian identity.
- When a GLBT person comes out to you, affirm him or her and respond as you would to any other person who reveals important or sensitive information.
- Integrate GLBT concerns into the concerns of minority student communities.
- Resist privileging heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships and institutions in programs, services, classrooms, leisure time, and social activities.
- Understand why there is heterosexual privilege.
- Be supportive when a GLBT person is upset or angry about discriminatory treatment.
- Respect a person’s choice not to reveal his or her GLBT identity.
- Believe in yourself!
- Recognize that everyone, both allies and GLBT people alike, are the product of a heterosexist and homophobic society.
- Assume that making mistakes is part of the learning process of being an effective ally. Acknowledge and apologize for mistakes; learn from them, but **do not retreat** as an ally.
- Be a 100% ally; no deals; no strings attached.
- Have a good understanding of sexual orientation and be comfortable with your own.
- Be aware of the coming out process and realize it is a lifelong process. The coming out process is unique to GLBT people and brings challenges that are not often understood.
- Understand that GLBT people receive the same messages about homosexuality and bisexuality as everyone else. Thus, GLBT people suffer from internalized homophobia and heterosexism. It is important to recognize the risks of coming out and to challenge the internal oppression.
- Remember that GLBT people are a diverse group-no two gay people are exactly alike in their experiences as a gay person.
- Know at least basic information about AIDS/HIV in order to address myths and misinformation and to be supportive of those effected by this disease, whether in

themselves or in partners and friends. Remember that AIDS/HIV is a health issue for all, not just GLBT people.

## How can I be a ally to the transgender and intersex communities?

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If you are asking the question, you've already demonstrated the first step in being an ally to often invisible and/or marginalized communities. The following points are suggestions rather than rules need to be followed. As with anything in our social world, individuals have different preferences, and those preferences should be respected. With that said, here is a list of suggestions that you might consider:

- Although the trans and intersex communities share a lot of similarities, it is important to remember that they are also separate communities.
- Don't assume you can tell if someone is intersex or transgender. When addressing or speaking about any group of people, speak as though someone in the room might be TG or IS because, well, they might be!!!
- Do not tolerate anti-trans or anti-intersex remarks or humor in public spaces.
- Report all anti-trans or anti-intersex harassment to the proper authorities.
- Display positive materials for trans and intersex persons. If possible, display relevant posters or flyers. (i.e., the Safe Zone placard).
- Respect the confidentiality of anyone who comes out to you as trans and/or intersex. If your sense is that the person is "out" to everyone, ask just to be sure. ("Is there anyone with whom you prefer I not share this information?")
- Deal with feelings first. If a person is coming out or dealing with painful experiences, you can help tremendously just by listening.
- Use the pronouns of the gender they feel themselves to be. For instance, if a person says that she identifies as female, use "she"/"her" - regardless of what kind of body that person may have been born into. If you are not sure which pronouns a person prefers, ask, "Which pronouns would you like me to use / do you prefer?" This is sign of respect and support.
- Do your best to be respectful and call the person by the name they request. Although it can be hard to refer to a person by a new name, a gender questioning person will usually notice and appreciate your concerted effort to respect their wishes.
- An intersex person may have undergone painful surgeries without their consent that can have permanent effects on their life (e.g. reduced or absent sexual function, increased susceptibility to infections, etc). This non-consensual violation of bodily integrity can have lasting emotional effects as well. Realize that because of these possibilities, an intersex person may not want to hear that infant genital surgeries are "for the best" or "necessary," since those judgments may ignore values that they hold dear.

- Be wary of assuming that a common genital conformation is better than an unusual one. Many trans and intersex folks are comfortable with their bodies. The message behind genital surgeries is that there is something freakish and unacceptable about uncommon genital conformations, such that the person who has or had those genitals must be a "freak." Such a message conveys extreme disrespect and can severely damage a person's self-esteem.
- If your family bears or adopts a trans or intersex child, get all the facts before making medical decisions. Seek out support groups (for example, for an intersex child you can find support at [www.aidsd.org](http://www.aidsd.org)).
- Trans and intersex people have usually been targets of violence. This tradition continues today and is often based on the idea that gender is a rigid, bi-polar category that cannot be violated. A small but useful way to help change this is to examine your own ideas of gender stereotypes and challenge those around you to do the same.
- If someone assumes that you are trans or intersex (or, for that matter, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, etc.) just because you are an ally, don't rush to deny it. You might try to determine why someone is asking. If you feel a strong urge to deny it, examine that discomfort and the reasons behind it.

Remember: above all, trans and intersex people are individual human beings who deserve respect and understanding.

Adapted from: Eli Green and Eric Peterson for the UC Riverside LGBT Resource Center (200

## Understanding & Challenging Heterosexism

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Heterosexism: discrimination or prejudice against homosexuals on the assumption that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation. Closely tied to hegemony.

Hegemony: the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group.

#### EDUCATE YOURSELF

- Read gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender literature and history
- Read newspapers or journals that feather LGBT news/issues
- Go through a whole day imagining yourself to be an LGBT person
- Attend LGBT films, workshops, seminars, cultural events, speakers, etc
- Attend a meeting of a group such as PFLAG (Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
- Listen to and learn from LGBT people

#### MODEL NON-HETEROSEXIST/NON-HOMOPHOBIC BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES

- Take pride in your same-sex friendships
- Use inclusive language like partner or date rather than husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend
- Make friends with and get to know LGBT people
- Don't make assumptions about other's sexual orientation or sexual identity
- Don't assume that being LGBT is only about being sexual
- Don't assume LGBT people do not have, like or want children
- Keep information you have about other's sexual orientation confidential
- Use the same standards for same sex affection in public that you would use for opposite sex affection

#### CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE & WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

- Assume that some people in your group/class/community etc are LGBT
- Assume that closeted LGBT in groups/classes/communities/communities are wondering if the environment is safe- provide safety by making clear you support and accept all people
- Put up displays that are inclusive of same sex couples or references to LGBT people
- Post fliers announcing events of interest to LGBT people- remember that there is a heterosexist assumption, so actively advertise that LGBT people are welcome (especially at dances or parties)
- Find out about and share resources and information on gay-affirmative service providers, companies, events etc.
- Say the words "gay", "lesbian", "bisexual" and "transgender" out loud, comfortably- be aware that there may be LGBT people around you, even if they are not "out"

#### EDUCATE OTHERS

- Sponsor a workshop on homophobia
- Sponsor an LGBT speakers bureau/program
- Sponsor films that inform about or are simply inclusive of LGBT people
- Set up bulletin board displays on LGBT culture/issues/people
- Have informal discussions where you live, go to school, work, and with friends
- Plan celebrations and educational events for Coming Out week or surrounding Pride festival/parades in your area

- Offer alternative, accurate information when you hear homophobic stereotypes, myths or slurs
- Write articles for the newspaper about LGBT issues

#### CONFRONT INCIDENTS

- Interrupt heterosexist/gendered jokes, slurs, comments or assumptions
- Actively react to anonymous anti-gay graffiti
- Get support for yourself when confronting incidents
- Make clear to all involved both the relevant policies and your own feelings
- Provide support to the victim/target of an attack, if applicable
- Critically review local media for heterosexual bias and inform the editor with complaints/suggestions

#### TAKE A PUBLIC STAND

- Wear buttons/shirts/bumper stickers that proclaim your support of gay rights or presumptions of heterosexuality
- Attend rallies or marches to support LGBT people
- Sign petitions supporting gay rights
- Promote LGBT non-discrimination policies
- Campaign to pass gay rights bills
- Form or join support/activist groups for heterosexual allies
- Organize with others to get more resources for your campus/community, ie: an LGBT office, queer studies academic programs, pro-LGBT counselors, LGBT speakers/events

Adapted from Diversity Works, 201 N. Valley Rd. PELHAM, MA 01002 (413) 256-1868

## Myths and Facts Regarding LGBT People

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For many people, much of what they think they know about GLBT people is based on the myths they've heard about them, not the realities. Sorting out the myths and realities can lead to greater self-awareness which motivates us to learn more and become accepting of

those whose sexual orientation may be different from our own. It's important to remember that most of the negative stereotypes of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people are based on erroneous or inadequate information. Here are some myths and facts to help you flesh out what's what:

**Myth: It's a "Choice"**

Fact: While researchers continue to disagree on the causes of sexual orientation, most agree that there is a predisposition or genetic relationship involved. The only place where choice seems to come into play is when GLBT people decide how they will acknowledge and identify that they are. "Coming Out," or acknowledging one's sexual orientation, to oneself or others, can be a lifelong process. GLBT people are often in a continual state of deciding whom to come out to, and with whom to "stay in the closet." Sexual orientation and gender identity are not choices, any more than being left-handed or having brown eyes or being straight are choices.

**Myth: It's a "Lifestyle"**

Fact: It's sometimes said that GLBT people live a gay "lifestyle." The problem with that word is that it can trivialize GLBT people and the struggles they face. Being GLBT is no more a lifestyle than being straight -- it's a life, just like anyone else's.

**Myth: Same-Sex Relationships Don't Last**

Fact: Same-sex couples can, and do, form lasting, lifelong, committed relationships-- just like any other couple. And just like any other couple sometimes same-sex relationships end. The primary difference is that same-sex couples have few opportunities to marry or enter into civil unions or domestic partnerships.

**Myth: GLBT People Can't Have Families**

Fact: According to the 2000 Census, more than 1 million children-- probably many more-- are being raised by same-sex couples nationwide. The American Psychological Association and other major medical and scientific researchers have stated that children of gay and lesbian parents are as mentally healthy as children raised by straight parents.

**Myth: GLBT People Aren't Happy**

Fact: In 1994, the American Medical Association released a statement saying, "Most of the emotional disturbance experienced by gay men and lesbians around their sexual identity is not based on physiological causes but rather is due more to a sense of alienation in an unaccepting environment." What that means is that the discrimination and stress that GLBT people face is the root cause of a great deal of pain for many GLBT people. That pain can be alleviated by knowing that there is a vibrant, growing community of GLBT and straight-supportive Americans who know and care about GLBT people and the issues they face.

**Myth: GLBT People Can "Change" or be "Cured"**

Fact: No scientifically valid evidence exists that shows that people can change their sexual orientation, although some people do repress it. The most reputable medical and psychotherapeutic groups say you should not try to change your sexual orientation as the process can actually be damaging.

**Myth: GLBT people can usually be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.**

Fact: GLBT people come in as many different shapes, colors, and sizes as do heterosexuals. Only a very small percentage has stereotypic mannerisms and characteristics. In fact, many heterosexuals portray a variety of the so-called gay stereotypic characteristics. Some members of different subcultures may tend to mimic or imitate specific behaviors in an effort to “fit in”.

**Myth: In a GLBT relationship, one partner usually plays the “husband” or “butch” role and the other plays the “wife” or “femme” role**

Fact: This is an old pattern that was evident in some gay or lesbian relationships when gay and lesbian people had only the traditional heterosexual relationships as a model. Today, most gay and lesbian people work to develop relationships based on principles of equality and mutuality where they are loved for who they are not for the roles they play. There is no right or wrong way that prescribes how to divide roles between partners.

**We do not know what causes homosexuality**

Fact: This is by far one of the most controversial issues. Perhaps a better question would be: “What determines our sexual orientation?” To date, no research has conclusively established the causes of either homosexuality, bisexuality, or heterosexuality. Some believe orientation is predetermined genetically or hormonally. Others maintain that all humans are predisposed to all variations of sexual/affectionate behavior and learn their orientation.

**Myth: The majority of child molesters are gay or lesbian**

Fact: Statistics regarding child molestation prepared by the Boston Advocates for Human Rights reveal that, “the vast majority of child molestation- over 90%- is performed by heterosexual males”. The man who is sexually interested in children is rarely homosexual.

**Myth: Gays and lesbians regard themselves as members of the other sex**

Fact: Most, if not all, gay and lesbian people are very happy with their gender. In many ways, their identity is seen as a celebration and affirmation of their gender, not a rejection of it. Many times people confuse homosexuality with being transgender or a cross-dresser. Transgender people feel as if they were born into the wrong body and should be the other sex. Cross-dressers are people who often dress in the traditional clothing of the other sex. Most cross-dressers are heterosexual.

**Myth: Homosexuality is not “natural,” that is, it does not exist in nature; therefore this proves it is dysfunctional**

Fact: Each culture defines what is “natural” to fit its own context. Historians tell us that homosexuality has existed since the earliest of human societies. Anthropologists report that lesbians and gay men have been part of every culture. In one study of non-Western cultures, 64% of the respondents considered homosexuality as “normal and socially acceptable.” It is also a well-known fact that same sex behavior is “natural” between animals.

**Myth: GLBT people should not be teachers because they will try to convert their students to their lifestyle**

Fact: It is impossible to convert heterosexuals to being homosexuals, just as it is impossible to convert homosexuals to being heterosexuals. Based on what is known about sexual attraction, this is simply not possible.

**Myth: There are very few “bisexuals;” most people are either completely homosexual or heterosexual**

Fact: The pioneering studies of Dr. Alfred Kinsey and his associates are most frequently cited on this question. This data suggested that, in fact, few people are entirely heterosexual or homosexual. Most people fall somewhere along the continuum between these two ends of the scale, and thus, have the capacity to experience both affection and sexual feelings for members of both sexes.

**There are some significant differences among the lifestyles of GLBT people**

Fact: This tends to be a true statement in that all people tend to develop their own individual lifestyle. Just like there are differences between the lifestyles of men and women, there are differences between the lifestyles of gay men and lesbians. It is also important to note that there are significant differences among members of each of these communities. For example, just as there are a variety of different women, so are there a variety of different lesbians. The most accurate generalization might be this: lesbian, gay and bisexual people are different from one another in the same ways that heterosexual people are different from one another.

**Myth: Homosexuality is a type of mental illness and can be cured by appropriate psychotherapy**

Fact: In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of official mental illnesses. In 1974 the American Psychological Association did the same. The APA went further to state that: “Homosexuality, per se, implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capacities.”

**Myth: One homosexual experience as an adolescent will play a large part in determining whether a person will be homosexually oriented as an adult**

Fact: Many, and perhaps most, gay and lesbian people have had early heterosexual experiences, and continue to identify themselves as gay or lesbian. Similarly, there are many heterosexual people who have had sexual contact with a person of the same sex, and continue to define themselves as heterosexual. Sexual orientation for most people goes well beyond just sexual acts, including both a culture and a lifestyle.

**Myth: LGBT people “flaunt” their sexuality when they talk about their partner, hold hands or kiss one another in public**

Fact: These are activities that heterosexual couples do all the time. Due to homophobic reactions, heterosexual people are actually far more likely to “flaunt” their sexuality in public than lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals.

## Myths and Facts Regarding Bisexual People

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Sexuality runs along a continuum. It is not a static “thing”, but rather has the potential to change throughout one’s lifetime, and 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.

**Myth** Bisexuality doesn’t really exist. People who consider themselves bisexuals are going through a phase/confused/undecided/fence sitting. Ultimately they’ll settle down and realize they’re actually homosexual or heterosexual.

**Reality** Some people go through a transitional period of bisexuality on their way to adopting a lesbian/gay or heterosexual identity. For many others bisexuality remains a long term orientation. For some bisexuals, homosexuality was a transitional phase in their coming out as bisexuals. Many bisexuals may well be confused, living in a society where their sexuality is denied by homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, but that confusion is a function of oppression. Fence-sitting is a misnomer; there is no “fence” between homosexuality and heterosexuality except in the minds of people who rigidly divide the two.

**Myth** Bisexuality doesn’t really exist. People who consider themselves bisexual are really heterosexual but are experimenting/playing around/trying to be cool/liberated/trendy/politically correct.

**Reality** Whether an individual is an experimenting heterosexual or a bisexual depends on how s/he defines her/himself, rather than on some external standard. While there certainly are people for whom bisexual behavior is trendy, this does not negate the people who come to bisexual identity amidst pain and confusion and claim it with pride.

**Myth** Bisexuality doesn’t really exist. People who consider themselves bisexuals are actually lesbian/gay, but haven’t fully accepted themselves and finished coming out of the closet (acknowledging their attraction to people of the same gender).

**Reality** Bisexuality is a legitimate sexual orientation. Many bisexuals are completely out of the closet, but not on the lesbian/gay community’s terms. (It is worth noting that many lesbian and gay men are not completely out of the closet and their process is generally respected; it is also worth noting that the lesbian/gay community whose “terms” are in question here has tended to be white and middle class, and the terms may be quite different for working class lesbians, gays of color, etc.) Bisexuals in this country share with lesbians and gays the debilitating experience of heterosexism (the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and thereby rendering other sexual identities invisible) and homophobia (the hatred, fear, and discrimination against homosexuals).

**Myth** Bisexuals are shallow, narcissistic, untrustworthy, hedonistic and immoral.

Reality	This myth reflects our culture's ambivalence over sex and pleasure. The "sex" in bisexuality gets overemphasized, and our culture projects onto bisexuals its fascination with and condemnation of sex and pleasure.
Myth	Bisexuals are equally attracted to both sexes. Bisexual means having concurrent lovers of both sexes.
Reality	Most bisexuals are primarily attracted to either men or women, but do not deny the lesser attraction, whether or not they act on it. Some bisexuals are never sexual with women, men, or either. Bisexuality is about dreams and desires and capacities as much as it is about acts. Bisexuals are people who can have lovers of either sex, not people who must have lovers of both sexes. Some bisexual people may have concurrent lovers, but bisexuals do not need to be with both sexes in order to feel fulfilled.
Myth	Bisexuals are promiscuous hypersexual swingers who are attracted to every woman and man they meet. Bisexuals cannot be monogamous; nor can they marry or live in traditional committed relationships. They could never be celibate.
Reality	Bisexual people have a range of sexual behaviors. Like lesbians, gays, or heterosexuals, some have multiple partners, some have one partner, some go through periods without any partners. Promiscuity is no more prevalent in the bisexual population than in other groups of people.
Myth	Bisexuals spread AIDS to the lesbian and heterosexual communities.
Reality	The myth above allows discrimination against bisexuals to be legitimized. The label "bisexual" simply refers to sexual orientation. It says nothing about whether one practices safe sex or not. AIDS occurs in people of all sexual orientations. AIDS is contracted through unsafe sexual practices, shared needles, and contaminated blood transfusions. Sexual orientation does not "cause" AIDS.
Myth	Politically speaking, bisexuals are traitors to the cause of lesbian/gay liberation. They pass as heterosexual to avoid trouble and maintain heterosexual privilege.
Reality	Obviously there are bisexuals who pass as heterosexuals to avoid trouble. There are also many lesbians and gays who do this. To "pass" for heterosexual and deny the part of you that loves people of the same gender is just as painful and damaging for a bisexual as it is for a lesbian/gay. Politicized bisexuals remain aware of heterosexual privilege and are committed enough to lesbian/gay/bisexual rights not to just abandon lesbian/gay communities when in heterosexual relationships.
Myth	Bisexual women will always leave their lesbian lovers for men.
Reality	Although this does sometimes happen, one can also find examples of bisexual women who have good long-term relationships with lesbians.

There are bisexuals for whom bisexuality is a phase; there are also lesbians for whom lesbianism is a phase. There are bisexuals and lesbians who never really come to grips with their sexuality and internalized homophobia. Bisexual women who truly accept themselves and their sexuality will leave a relationship with a woman or a man when it no longer works for them. The same could be said of lesbians who accept themselves. As hard as it is to get clear about the reasons a relationship may end, and as many challenges as lesbian relationships in particular may face, the notion that bisexual women can't handle lesbian relationships is just a stereotype.

- Myth            Bisexuals get the best of both worlds and a doubled chance for a date on Saturday night.
- Reality        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. As to the doubled chance for a date theory, that depends more upon the individual's personality than it does upon her/his bisexuality. Bisexuals don't radiate raw sex any more than do lesbians, gays, or heterosexuals. If a bisexual woman has a hard time meeting people, her bisexuality won't help much.
- Myth            Bisexuals are desperately unhappy, endlessly seeking some kind of peace, which they cannot ever find.
- Reality        Like lesbians and gays who have been told that they will live awful lives, bisexuals can respond that much of the pain comes from oppression, so people concerned about the "awful lives" of bisexuals should join the fight against homophobia.

It is important to remember that "bisexual", "lesbian", "gay", and "heterosexual" are labels created by a homophobic, biphobic, heterosexist society to separate and alienate us from each other. We are all unique and don't fit into distinct categories. We sometimes need to use these labels for political reasons and to increase our visibilities. Our sexual esteem is facilitated by acknowledging and accepting the differences and seeing the beauty in our diversity.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted and altered from Sharon Sumpter's and Amanda Udis-Ressler's pieces on the myths and realities of bisexuality. Both Sumpter and Udis-Ressler are self-identified bisexuals. <http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/odama/glb/bisexuality.pdf>

## Symbols of Pride

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### **Stonewall and Pride Celebrations**

On June 28, 1969, a routine raid on the Stonewall Bar on Christopher Street in New York City turned into a riot when patrons resisted. The patrons barricaded themselves inside the

bar. The riot escalated until reinforcements arrived. The riots continued for several evenings. This rebellion, begun by drag queens and bar patrons, marked the beginning of the modern gay and lesbian movement. Each June, pride marches, rallies, and celebrations are held throughout the nation commemorating Stonewall.

### **The Pink Triangle**

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

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

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

### **The Rainbow Flag**

The Rainbow Flag has been adopted by the gay and lesbian community as its own design. It depicts not the shape of the rainbow but its colors in horizontal stripes.

Created in 1978 for San Francisco’s Gay Freedom Celebration by local artist Gilbert Baker, it was inspired by the “Flag of the Races” that had five stripes—one for each of the colors of humankind’s skin—flown at the 1960 college campus demonstrations.

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

## **RESOURCES**

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### **CAMPUS**

Gay/Straight Alliance

"Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a youth leadership organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources. Through peer support, leadership development, and training, GSA Network supports young people in starting, strengthening, and sustaining GSAs and builds the capacity of GSAs to: 1. create safe environments in schools for students to support each other and learn about homophobia and other oppressions, 2. educate the school community about homophobia, gender identity, and sexual orientation issues, and 3. fight discrimination, harassment, and violence in schools (<http://www.gsanetwork.org>).

The email address to the SIUE Gay/Straight alliance is: [sota\\_thegsa@yahoo.com](mailto:sota_thegsa@yahoo.com)

### Delta Lambda Phi

Delta Lambda Phi Social Fraternity (DLP) is a fraternity for gay, bisexual, transgender and progressive (straight and supportive) men. Though they are a fraternity for men, they do give help and support to all fellow GLBTQA individuals. Simply put, they are members of a society that foster an equal, fair and welcoming environment to all on the SIUE campus. If you are interested in joining, please email [betazeta.chapter@dlp.org](mailto:betazeta.chapter@dlp.org) or visit [www.dlp.org/betazeta](http://www.dlp.org/betazeta).

### SIUE Safe Zone Allies

Safe Zone allies are available for all students who have concerns about GLBT issues on campus. ALL our allies believe that students at SIUE, regardless of race, sex, religion or sexual orientation, deserve respect. Please see the list for available faculty/staff on SIUE campus ready, willing and able to help. <http://www.siu.edu/lgbt/>

### Counseling Services

Counseling Services provides free, confidential, individual counseling for students. Many students dealing with questions or concerns related to sexual orientation or gender identity choose to seek counseling as a safe place for discussion. Counseling Services is a designated Safe Zone dedicated to providing all clients quality care with respect for sexual orientation and gender identity. On the Counseling Services web site you will find a page specifically for GLBT Resources. <http://www.siu.edu/counseling/>

Phone: (618) 650 2842

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:00- 4:30

Emergencies after hours call 911

## **LOCAL**

### ACLU of Eastern MO

The American Civil Liberties Union of Eastern Missouri (ACLU-EM) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, membership organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of civil liberties in eastern Missouri. Located in St. Louis, ACLU-EM is an affiliate of the national ACLU. American Civil Liberties Union of Eastern Missouri, 454 Whittier Street St. Louis,

Missouri 63108. Intake Line: (314) 652-3111; Administrative Line: (314) 652-3114;  
www.aclu-em.org

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#### Anti-Violence Advocacy Project

The Mission of AVAP is to provide education and advocacy that addresses intimate and sociopolitical violence and oppression based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

All AVAP services can be accessed through ALIVE's 24-hour crisis line: (314) 993-2777;  
Email: anti-violence@sbcglobal.net; Website: <http://www.alivestl.org/AVAP.html>

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#### Beta Zeta (SIUE Campus)

The Beta Zeta Chapter of Delta Lambda Phi has become a recognized Greek organization on the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) campus.

Within the past few years, we have managed to accomplish multiple awards from SIUE as well as our national organization. We welcome all men to rush our fraternity, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Website: [www.dlp.org/betazeta](http://www.dlp.org/betazeta)

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#### Bethany Place

Bethany Place has grown to serve hundreds of clients, their families and caregivers with the spirit of compassion and justice. Services are available to all persons living with HIV/AIDS regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race or religion. Meeting Day/Frequency: 2nd and 4th Wednesday; Meeting Time: 5:00PM {14-17yrs}; 7:00PM {18 and Up}; Phone: 618-234-0291; Website: <http://www.bethanyplace.org>

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#### Bisexual Alliance of St. Louis (BASL)

BASL is a social/support group that discusses bisexuality as a normal part of everyday life. Our goal is to develop a sense of support and community within the St. Louis Metropolitan region. We are simply people who love regardless of gender. Email: Jimmy:basl@prodigy.net; Website: [www.bistolouis.org](http://www.bistolouis.org)

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#### Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE)

COLAGE's purpose is to create a community for youth to engage, connect and empower them with LGBT parents in St. Louis. We are working with One St. Louis to facilitate and conduct workshops and youth programming.

Phone: (314) 241-1114 Email: [youth@onesaintlouis.org](mailto:youth@onesaintlouis.org) Website: [www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org)  
Doorways Interfaith AIDS, Housing & Services

DOORWAYS is an interfaith agency which provides, affordable, secure housing and related supportive services to people living with HIV/AIDS. DOORWAYS serves all people affected by HIV/AIDS regardless of age, color, creed, physical or mental disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender identity and expression, national origin, race, religion, pregnancy, sex or sexual orientation. 4385 Maryland Avenue, Saint Louis, Missouri 63108-2703. Telephone:

314.535.1919; Facsimile: 314.535.0909; [info@doorwayshousing.org](mailto:info@doorwayshousing.org);  
[www.doorwayshousing.org](http://www.doorwayshousing.org)

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### Equality Illinois

The mission of Equality Illinois is to secure, protect and defend equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (“LGBT”) people in Illinois. Founded in 1991, we are the state’s LGBT equality advocacy organization. Equality Illinois has been a key leader for every major LGBT-rights victory in Illinois over the past 20 years, including: numerous local non-discrimination ordinances, Chicago Human Rights Ordinance, Illinois Hate Crimes Act, Illinois Human Rights Act, Prevent School Violence Act (aka Safe Schools Act), and the recently-enacted robust Civil Union Law.

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### Ethical Society of St. Louis

The Ethical Society of St. Louis is an ethics-centered religious community committed to creating a world in which all people choose to live ethically. The Ethical Society has a subcommittee on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues which supports community and faith-based groups that offer services to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in the St. Louis area. Phone: 314-991-0955; Email: [office@ethicalstl.org](mailto:office@ethicalstl.org); Website: [www.ethicalstl.org](http://www.ethicalstl.org)

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### Food Outreach

Food Outreach is the only St. Louis area organization whose mission is to provide nutritional support and enhance the quality of life of men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS or Cancer. Founded in 1988 by friends caring for friends living with HIV/AIDS and with its expanded mission to also include cancer, we set a record in 2010, with more than 473,781 meals going to clients in need. Over 600 volunteers and an impassioned staff of 10 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees cook, pack and distribute these meals. E-mail: [info@foodoutreach.org](mailto:info@foodoutreach.org); Website: <http://www.foodoutreach.org>

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### Gay-Straight Alliance at SIUE

The Gay-Straight Alliance at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is a safe haven for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. All students are welcome to join the group to make SIUE a safer and more inclusive campus for all students, faculty and staff.

Email: [sota.thegsa@yahoo.com](mailto:sota.thegsa@yahoo.com)

### Gender Youth Group

Group for Transgender, gender questioning, and gender variant youth (ages 13-24) to come meet. We meet the 1st Wednesday of every Month at 7pm at the SPOT.

Mission: Social/Support/Referral Group for Transgender, gender questioning, and gender variant youth(ages 13-24) to come meet. We meet monthly.

Phone: (314) 535-7275 Email: [transyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:transyouthgroup@gmail.com); Website: [www.myspace.com/stlgyg](http://www.myspace.com/stlgyg)

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### Growing American Youth

Growing American Youth is a social support organization for youth who live near St. Louis (Also meetings in Saint Charles [see website]) and who are 21 and under and may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual or questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. Growing American Youth has been serving St. Louis area youth for 30 years. Meeting Day/Frequency: Every Thursday; Meeting Time: 8:00-9:30PM; Meeting Venue/Location: Trinity Episcopal Church; Phone: 314-821-3524; Email: [info@growingamericanyouth.org](mailto:info@growingamericanyouth.org); Website: [www.growingamericanyouth.org](http://www.growingamericanyouth.org)

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### Human Rights Campaign - St. Louis Steering Committee

The St. Louis Steering Committee of the Human Rights Campaign is a diverse volunteer group of individuals working each and every day to bring the mission of HRC to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender and straight-supportive people in this area. By taking part in community events, prides, town hall meetings and partnerships with other organizations, these volunteers are working hard to support HRC's efforts in the movement for equal rights for LGBT people. And this struggle for equality needs your help! The group is structured into several committees focusing on vital areas of the work HRC does. Website: <http://stlouis.hrc.org/>

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### I CARE!

I CARE! serves as an informational network to direct those in distress to the appropriate organization. I CARE! wants you to know that you are not alone and that someone cares about you. Issues include Suicide, Homelessness, HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention, Older Adults, and Hate Crimes in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex and ally communities.

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### Lavender Lotus

Lavender Lotus is a supportive network organization based in the St. Louis area for Asian & Pacific Islander Americans who identify as LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning, etc.). We organize activities that range from potlucks, movie nights, bike rides, casual afternoons at a coffeehouse, etc., as well as partake in events at the annual Pridefest in Tower Grove. By being a visible entity, Lavender Lotus aims to promote social and cultural welfare for all marginalized communities. Email: [lavlotus@gmail.com](mailto:lavlotus@gmail.com)  
One St. Louis

One Saint Louis is a volunteer service organization working to fill the gaps in services for the LGBT and other underserved communities of the Greater Saint Louis Metropolitan area through programs in low-income assistance, education, youth, community support, and its

legal project. One Saint Louis envisions a city in which all people are unified by mutual support and understanding, free from want or inequality.

Phone: (314) 241-1114 Location: 1919 S. Broadway St. Louis, MO 63104

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

Website: <http://onesaintlouis.org>

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### Planned Parenthood

For more than 75 years, Planned Parenthood has been the leading provider, educator and protector for reproductive health care in St. Louis. Our health services give individuals the power and the ability to take control of their lives, their health and their future. Our education programs give medically-accurate information to help teens make responsible decisions about their reproductive future and strengthens parent-teen communication. Our public policy work empowers individuals to take action to influence local, state and federal elected officials to protect and advance access to reproductive health services.

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/stlouis/>

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PFLAG St. Louis, St. Charles, and Belleville, IL

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays {PFLAG}: PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity. Phone: 314-821-FLAG ; Contact Email: [info@pflagstl.org](mailto:info@pflagstl.org) ; Website: <http://www.pflagstl.org/>

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Prizm of University of Missouri St. Louis

Prizm of University of Missouri - Saint Louis: PRIZM is the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender alliance at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Contact Email:

[prizm@umsl.edu](mailto:prizm@umsl.edu); Phone: 314-516-5013; Website: <http://www.umsl.edu/~prizm/>

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### Project ARK

Project ARK is committed to providing services that enhance the lives of children, youth, young adults, women and families infected, affected and at risk for HIV disease through coordination of medical care, social support and prevention services. We are the only organization in the St. Louis metropolitan area that specifically coordinates medical care, social support and prevention services for these population groups. We support our clients through these direct services, as well as advocacy, funding and offering access to research. 4169 Laclede Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63108. Phone: 314.535.7275; Fax: 314.535.1814;

Website: <http://projectark.wustl.edu/>

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PROMO

PROMO is Missouri's statewide organization advocating for LGBT equality through legislative action, electoral politics, grassroots organizing, and community education. We identify rights supporters, educate them on the issues, give them the tools and the confidence to participate in the political process and get results. Email: [promo@promoonline.org](mailto:promo@promoonline.org); Phone: 314-862-4900; Website: <http://promoonline.org>

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#### Rainbow Alliance of St. Louis University

Rainbow Alliance of Saint Louis University: Rainbow Alliance at Saint Louis University is an advocacy and support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning students and their allies. Email: [rainbow@slu.edu](mailto:rainbow@slu.edu); Phone: 314-977-2423; Website: [www.slu.edu/organizations/rainbow](http://www.slu.edu/organizations/rainbow)

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#### Safe Schools Coalition

Bullying continues unabated in the Missouri public education system. Sadly, bullying based on different social characteristics occurs all too frequently in Missouri schools. The Safe Schools Coalition of Missouri is a team comprised of organizations across the state working to end bullying in Missouri public schools.

In order to pass this much needed legislation, Missouri Safe Schools Coalition needs you and your organization. We are a team comprised of organizations across the state working to end bullying in Missouri public schools. Phone 314-862-4900; Fax 314-862-1072; Address: 438 N. Skinker Blvd St Louis, MO 63130; Website: [www.safeschoolsmissouri.org](http://www.safeschoolsmissouri.org)

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#### The SPOT

Youth partnering with community for social justice and health represents the vision for The SPOT. True to this vision, The SPOT welcomes ALL youth (13-24) and responds to their particular needs through a comprehensive model of health and social services.

Open Monday - Friday from 1pm - 5pm Phone: (314) 535-0413

Fax: (314) 535-0038

Web Site: [theSPOT.wustl.edu](http://theSPOT.wustl.edu)

Address: 4169 Laclede Ave. St. Louis, MO 63108

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#### St. Louis Black Pride

Saint Louis Black Pride, Inc.: St. Louis Black Pride provides awareness and visibility uplift to the African American LGBTQA community in the St. Louis Metropolitan area through education and outreach. Meeting Day/Frequency: 3rd Thursdays Meeting Time: 6:30PM Meeting Venue/Location: Harris Stowe State College

Contact Email: [info@slbp.org](mailto:info@slbp.org) Phone: 314-776-4966 Website: <http://www.slbp.org>

St. Louis Community College - Wildwood

LGBT-S CLUB: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered and Supporters

St. Louis Community College - Wildwood is a place of higher education, a place where students come expecting tolerance and the chance to expand their understandings and

views of the world around them. STLCC is a place where “dynamic learning environments are focused on the needs of our diverse community”. Our diverse student population is an important part of the learning environment...for everyone. While we will never know exactly how many LGBT people there are, the most educated estimation is 1 in 10. STLCC – Wildwood has over 1,900 students; that’s 190 LGBT people.

For more information or to become a member,  
please contact: Keith Robben, Faculty Sponsor Email: [KRobben@stlcc.edu](mailto:KRobben@stlcc.edu)

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#### St. Louis Effort for AIDS (EFA)

We recognize the essential roles of compassion and education in preventing the spread of the disease and encourage everyone to learn their HIV status. If they test positive, we will connect them with resources to help them learn to live with the disease.

EFA continues to honor our history and aggressively renew our mission of providing education on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and comprehensive support for those who are affected by the disease. We invite your involvement in this important mission. Check our calendar for upcoming events. 1027 S Vandeventer Ave # 700, Saint Louis, MO 63110-3842. Phone: (314) 645-6451; [www.stlefa.org/](http://www.stlefa.org/)

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#### St. Louis Metro Rainbow of the Deaf

St. Louis Metro Rainbow of the Deaf (StL MRD): A social group for deaf gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people as well as both interested hearing individuals and gay-friendly people in the Metro St. Louis area. The goal is to setup a social circle to meet and enjoy good times together for both deaf and hearing individuals. StL MRD is also interested in growing together and showing an united front to the Metro St. Louis area.

Contact Email: Missy Owoc: [owocats@tmail.com](mailto:owocats@tmail.com)  
Website: <http://www.stlmrd.blogspot.com/>  
Meeting Venue/Location: MoKaBe's Coffee House

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#### Steps Alano Club

The Steps Alano Club is a nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to provide meeting space for 12-step recovery fellowships, and to support the recovering community through fellowship, friendship, and service. Founded by members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) community, the Steps Alano Club welcomes all who seek sanctuary from addiction.

Led by a volunteer board of directors who are elected from the membership, the Alano Club welcomes you to our website, and invites you to find the recovery here and at meetings in our facility. 3974 Humphrey, St St Louis, MO 63116. Website: <http://www.stlstepsalano.com/>

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#### Social Justice Center at Washington University

Social Justice Center at Washington University: The Social Justice Center is a student-run organization that promotes awareness and understanding of social justice and diversity

issues by providing education, facilitation, and resources. Contact Email: [socialjusticecenter@aismail.wustl.edu](mailto:socialjusticecenter@aismail.wustl.edu); Phone: 314-935-7683; Website: <http://sjc.myreslife.wustl.edu/>

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## TransHaven

TransHaven is a Board-only non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Missouri. TransHaven's Charter and Mission Statement is one of social justice. TransHaven serves as an active organization representing the Trans Community in advocacy, as well as supporting the issues of the broader LGBTIQ Community.

Location: 3672A Arsenal St. St Louis, Mo 63116. Phone: 314-329-7660 Info Line: 314-329-7668; Website: <http://transhaven.org>

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## Washington University LGBT Groups & Leadership

### ***Undergraduate Student Groups***

**Pride Alliance:** Pride Alliance has a general body meeting every two weeks on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00pm in Siegle Hall Room 304. Email [pridewu@gmail.com](mailto:pridewu@gmail.com) for more information.

**Safe Zones:** Safe Zones is a peer education student group that discusses issues around sexual orientation and gender identity in order to foster a more open and accepting university community. If you have any other questions, e-mail Safe Zones [atwusafezones@gmail.com](mailto:atwusafezones@gmail.com).

**Open:** Open provides a safe, supportive space for those at all stages of coming out and meets every two weeks on Sundays from 5:00-6:00pm. Email [wustl.open@gmail.com](mailto:wustl.open@gmail.com) for more information.

**Alternative Lifestyles Association:** The Alternative Lifestyles Association is a Student Union recognized group at Washington University in St. Louis dedicated to bringing resources to the Washington University campus and the St. Louis community in an effort to promote healthy attitudes towards sex and sexuality. We are open to all races, religions, genders, sexual orientations and kinks. ALA Meets every Sunday in the DUC Room 232 from 7:00-9:00pm. Visit their website for more information.

**Queer & Spiritual:** Queer & Spiritual is a discussion group for those who are queer and practice a faith or spirituality. The next meeting will be Monday 3/7 8-9pm at the Liggett/Koenig Library. For more information, contact Brian Blosser at [blosser@washucsc.org](mailto:blosser@washucsc.org).

### ***Graduate Student Groups***

**OUTgrads:** OUTgrads is an LGBTQIA group dedicated to developing community among Washington University graduate and professional students, faculty, and staff of all genders and sexual orientations. Visit here for more information and events.

**OUTLOOK:** OUTLOOK is the LGBT student organization at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work. Email OUTLOOK here.

**OUTLAW:** OUTLAW is an educational, political, and social alliance of law students interested in working with Washington University and the surrounding community towards fostering and maintaining an environment that is supportive, positive, and safe for individuals of sexual and gender diversity. Visit here for more information and events.

**Olin BranchOut:** Olin BranchOut is an alliance between the queer and straight MBA students at Olin Business School. Our mission is to be an inclusive, student-led organization that provides a safe space in which straight and queer students can ask frank questions and discuss issues that affect the queer and other minority communities. Email for more information!

**LGBT Health Interest Group:** LGBT Health Interest Group is of Washington University medical students dedicated to addressing the health care needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients and physicians. For more information, visit their website.

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#### Webster University LGBTQ Alliance

**Webster LGBTQ Alliance of Webster University:** Webster LGBTQ Alliance is a multi-focus GLBTQIA (gay, gender queer, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, ally, asexual) group open to all Webster University students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Contact Email: [lgbtqalliance@gmail.com](mailto:lgbtqalliance@gmail.com); Website: [www.myspace.com/lgbtqalliance](http://www.myspace.com/lgbtqalliance)

Additional Resources can be found at: <http://www.lgbtcenterstl.org/local-lgbt-community-organizations.html>

## **NATIONAL**

### CenterLink

CenterLink was founded in 1994 as a member-based coalition to support the development of strong, sustainable LGBT community centers. The organization has played an important role in supporting the growth of LGBT centers across the country and addressing the challenges they face, by helping them to improve their organizational and service delivery capacity and increase access to public resources. Based in Fort Lauderdale, FL, CenterLink works with other national organizations to advance the rights of LGBT individuals and to provide LGBT community centers with information and analysis of key issues. Website: [www.lgbtcenters.org](http://www.lgbtcenters.org)

### Friend Factor

Friendfactor is pioneering a new model of online organizing that will bring new supporters to the gay\* rights movement. The online platform has the power to reach millions of friends. Through public education and advocacy tools, Friendfactor cultivates new “champions of

freedom,” people who, when asked to support their gay\* and transgender friends, will do so. Gay\* friends matter more than gay\* issues for most people, but many friends don’t know what’s at stake or how to help, and most gay\* and transgender Americans don’t know how to ask. Friendfactor seeks to fill that gap and shift the gay\* rights dialogue away from ideology and toward a more personal and inclusive concept: friends helping friends. Go there on Facebook or Website: <http://www.friendfactor.org/>

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#### Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes in creating a more vibrant and diverse community. We welcome as members any and all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or occupation, who are committed to seeing this philosophy realized in K-12 schools. Website: [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

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#### Human Rights Campaign (HRC)

The Human Rights Campaign represents a grassroots force of over 750,000 members and supporters nationwide. As the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, HRC envisions an America where LGBT people are ensured of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community. Website: [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

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#### National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) is a 501(c)3 social justice organization dedicated to advancing the equality of transgender people through advocacy, collaboration and empowerment.

Please contact us if you would like to be added to this network and let us know what information you can provide to those seeking assistance. Website: [www.transequality.org](http://www.transequality.org)

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#### National Gay & Lesbian Task Force

The mission of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is to build the political power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community from the ground up. We do this by training activists, organizing broad-based campaigns to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and advance pro-LGBT legislation, and by building the organizational capacity of our movement. Our Policy Institute, the movement’s premier think tank, provides research and policy analysis to support the struggle for complete equality and to counter right-wing lies. As part of a broader social justice movement, we work to create a nation that respects the diversity of human expression and identity and creates opportunity for all. Website: [www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org)

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#### Out & Equal

Out & Equal provides widely recognized value to individuals and organizations through a range of programs designed to educate and empower, including our Building Bridges, LGBT Diversity Training, and Out & Equal University webinar series. Out & Equal mobilizes tens of thousands of professional staff, managers and executives in Out & Equal regional affiliate networks and our Employee Resource Group Registry. Through LGBTCareerLink, an online job search and career development portal, Out & Equal serves diversity -friendly employers and LGBT job seekers. Website: <http://outandequal.org>

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#### TransYouth Family Allies

TYFA empowers children and families by partnering with educators, service providers and communities, to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected. We envision a society free of suicide and violence in which ALL children are respected and celebrated. Website: [www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org)

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#### The Trevor Project

The Trevor Project is determined to end suicide among LGBTQ youth by providing life-saving and life-affirming resources including our nationwide, 24/7 crisis intervention lifeline, digital community and advocacy/educational programs that create a safe, supportive and positive environment for everyone.

The Trevor Project operates three core program areas in order to provide life-saving and life-affirming resources for LGBTQ youth and to create safe, accepting and inclusive environments for all young people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Website: <http://www.thetrevorproject.org> Phone: 1-866-4-U-TREVOR

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#### Victory Fund

The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund works to elect LGBT leaders to public office for one simple reason. They change America's politics.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender office holders are our clearest and most convincing champions for true equality. As leaders in government, they become the face and voice of a community. They challenge the lies of extremists and speak authentically about themselves, their families and their community.

Since 1991, the Victory Fund has helped thousands of openly LGBT candidates win election to local, state and federal offices. Website: <http://www.victoryfund.org>

## Laws & Policies

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### Non-Discrimination Policy

Please see the official statement at <http://www.siu.edu/policies/2c7.shtml>, a portion of which has been reprinted here for your convenience.

SIUE prohibits discrimination against employees, applicants for employment and students on the basis of age, color, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status. Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated; management and supervisory personnel, at all levels, are responsible for taking reasonable and necessary action to prevent discrimination.

#### Administrative Policies:

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville extends recognition of any civil union recognized by the State of Illinois. Employees who would like to utilize benefits that relate to same sex partners should contact the Office of Human Resources for more information.

#### Student Conduct Code: Student Responsibilities and Student Rights

No qualified student shall be barred from admission to the University, or participation in an institution, organization, or activity sponsored by the University on the basis of race, sex, creed, national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, or other prohibited bases of discrimination under law and the University Affirmative Action Plan. Students are entitled to an environment free from discrimination or harassment on the basis of the factors listed above. To read more about this, please go to the following website: <http://www.siu.edu/policies/3c1.shtml>.

#### State and Federal Laws & Policies

For policies and legislation regarding the LGBT community please visit the following websites:

<http://www.lambdalegal.org/states-regions>

<http://www.hrc.org/laws-and-legislation/state>

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