
Schools Remain Unsafe for Gay Students Study Shows

by Beth Shapiro

A new study, released to coincide with National Coming Out Day, shows that nearly a quarter of all LGBT students do not feel safe at school. The study, conducted by Harris Interactive for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, paints a disturbing picture.

It shows that 65% of all teens report that they have been verbally or physically harassed or assaulted during the past year. The study says that the harassment came about because of the teens' perceived or actual appearance, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, race/ethnicity, disability or religion. Appearance was the most common reason, the report says, but found that the next most common reason for frequent harassment is sexual orientation. One-third of teens reported that students are frequently harassed because they are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. LGBT students are three times as likely as non-LGBT students to say that they do not feel safe at school and 90 percent of LGBT students said they have been harassed or assaulted during the past year. The study, titled "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers," questioned 3,400 students aged 13-18 and over 1,000 secondary school teachers nationwide.

While more than two-thirds of students said their school has some type of anti-harassment policy, less than half of all students say their school has a policy that specifies sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. The survey found that having a harassment policy in place that specifically mentions sexual orientation or gender identity/expression is associated with more students feeling safe.

Kevin Jennings, the Executive Director of GLSEN, said that the study shows bullying and harassment can impact a student's ability to learn, "It also shows how having anti-harassment policies in schools - particularly those policies that include sexual orientation or gender identity/expression -- can be associated with students feeling safer." The study also found that 85% of secondary school teachers believe that they have an obligation to ensure a safe learning environment for LGBT students.

Taken From: <http://www.365gay.com/newscon05/10/101105schoolOut.htm>

The Story of the Rainbow Flag

Colour has long played an important role in our communities' history and expression of pride. In Victorian England, for example, the colour green was associated with homosexuality. The colour purple (or, more accurately, lavender) became popularized for the lesbian and gay communities with "Purple Power". And, of course there are the pink and black triangles. The pink triangle was first used by Hitler to identify gay males in Nazi concentration camps, and the black triangle was similarly used to identify lesbians and others deemed "asocial". The pink and black triangle symbols were reclaimed by our communities in the early 1980s to signify our strength of spirit and willingness to survive oppression. As we gain acceptance of our rights, the symbols of oppression are gradually being replaced by the symbols of celebration. By far the most colourful of our symbols is the Rainbow flag, and its rainbow of colours - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, which represent the diversity of our communities.

The first rainbow flag was designed in 1978 by Gilbert Baker, a San Francisco artist, in response to calls by activists for a symbol for the community. Baker used the five-striped "Flag of the Race" as his inspiration, and designed a flag with eight stripes: pink, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. These colours were intended to represent respectively: sexuality, life, healing, sun, nature, art, harmony, and spirit. Baker dyed and sewed the material for the first flag himself - reminiscent of Betsy Ross and the creation of the US Flag.

When Baker approached a company to mass-produce the flags, he found out that "hot pink" was not commercially available. The flag was then reduced to seven stripes.

In November 1978, San Francisco's lesbian, gay and bisexual community was stunned when the city's first openly gay supervisor, Harvey Milk, was assassinated. Wanting to demonstrate the gay community's strength and solidarity in the aftermath of the tragedy, the Pride Committee decided to use Baker's flag. The indigo stripe was eliminated so that the colours could be divided evenly along the parade route - three colours on one side and three on the other. Soon the six colours were incorporated into a six-striped version that became popularized and that, today is recognized by the International Congress of Flag Makers.

The flag has become an international symbol of pride and the diversity our communities.

Taken from: <http://www.365gay.com/lifestylechannel/intime/Index.htm>



Coming-Out for the First Time - Need Help

By Nicky P. Damania
(Bowling Green State University)

The term "Coming-Out" refers to the process of developing a positive lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity. Before an individual "comes out" they are commonly in a period of "questioning," in which they are curious about and either actively or inactively exploring their sexual identity. It is a long and difficult struggle for many questioning individuals because they often have to confront the phobias that they are socially instilled with while growing up. Before they can feel good about who they are, they have to challenge their own acquired beliefs and move from a negative attitude of repulsion and pity to feelings of appreciation and admiration. It often takes years of realization to develop a positive LGBT identity.

Coming out is a process that can be very difficult- however, in addition can also be extremely liberating and thus relieving- but queer individuals can to decide when and to whom they will disclose their sexual identity. The easiest way to come out would probably be to advertise on international television- instead of having to endure the constant agony face-to-face conversations and wondering how someone might initially react, especially a loved one- but of course, that idea is preposterous to anyone who doesn't have thousands of dollars for advertising purposes. There are many ways an individual can come out, but most choose to relay the information in person.

Be comfortable with yourself. Learn more about the queer community. Find resources about the queer community and resources on personal identity. It is very common for "questioning" individuals to have a personal identity crisis involving personal culture and religion. I strongly encourage individuals to join a coming-out support group. These groups give an individual a support network, protection, and help with working out a plan of action. Once you know you are comfortable, make a plan of action. Remember once you come-out, there is no going back.

The first one. Choose an individual to be your first. This individual should be someone you trust, love, respect, and admire and who you can tell. Confiding in the first person can start a negative or a positive chain reaction.

Choose the medium of communication. Face to face is the best way. Coming-out is a very personal matter and needs to be done in a comfortable environment. Choosing another medium like email, letter, or IM may not be the best way as many written communications can be misinterpreted.

The time and place. A public bar may not be the most appropriate place to come-out to an individual. Choose the place where you feel the most comfortable. Remember you may feel valuable during this experience and so will the individual. A calm and personable environment is needed. You and you only will be able to know when the suitable time is.

Ask permission to confide. Coming-out is a very personal matter. Once you tell someone they now have a part of your identity; this may be a burden for some individuals. By asking the individual for their permission you will also set the scene that what is about to happen is serious.

Come out. Less is always more. The fewer the words the better the comprehension will be for the individual. You are being fully honest with them for the first time about your sexuality. Do not be afraid of silence. There is a lot of power in silences. You need to remember that the individual maybe in shock at first and it took you a long time to discover your identity, so give them the time they need.

Ask and answer questions. Be prepared with answers to some of the common questions individuals ask queer individuals like, "Are you sure," "When did you know," "How do you know?" Keep cool and answer all of their questions honestly. The pace and the level of emotion is now in your hands. The more calm you are the better the conversation. They are learning what you already learned. This is their time to understand you. Take the time.

Saying thank you. Whatever the reaction maybe from the individual, remember to thank them. The two little words, "Thank You," can mean so much to them at the time. You have confided to them a valuable piece of your identity.

Drag King Rebellion started off in 2002 as N'Drag, a small group of friends lip-syncing and performing to the ultra poppy tunes of N'Sync. Since their membership has grown and evolved, as has their name and purpose. They all have their 'first-time' stories to tell, and they all have their reasons for doing what they do. In the end, they are all having fun doing it and that is apparent from the crowds' responses to their shows. Drag King Rebellion ever-expanding fan base is what inspires them to keep going and keep coming up with more creative ways to educate and entertain other individuals.

Please visit them at:

<http://www.geocities.com/dragkingrebellion>



Drag King Rebellion is Michigan's premiere gender performance troupe made up primarily of kings and bio-queens. Their members are folks who integrate all kinds of identities and experiences into a medley that turns out original, quality, and socially and politically conscious performances of gender. Whether they are doing dancy pop songs, sultry ballads, cheesy musicals, beat-blasting hip-hop, or intense rock, the purpose is to entertain, educate, and always have the realities of power, privilege, and oppression in context.



History of National Coming-Out Day (October 11th)

In the Beginning, there was a march: 1987

On October 11, 1987, half a million people participated in the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. This was the second such demonstration in our nation's capital and the first display of the NAMES Project Quilt, remembering those who have died from AIDS. One measure of the march's success was the number of organizations that were founded as a result — including the National Latino/a Gay & Lesbian Organization (LLEGÓ) and AT&T's GLBT employee group, LEAGUE. The momentum continued four months after this extraordinary march as more than 100 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender activists from around the country gathered in Manassas, Va., about 25 miles outside Washington, D.C. Recognizing that the GLBT community often reacted defensively to anti-gay actions, they came up with the idea of a national day to celebrate coming out and chose the anniversary of that second march on Washington to mark it. The originators of the idea were Rob Eichberg, a founder of the personal growth workshop, The Experience, and Jean O'Leary, then head of National Gay Rights Advocates. National Coming Out Day was born.

O'Leary expanded the West Hollywood, California, office of NGRG to give National Coming Out Day its first headquarters. She hired staff and began preparations for the big day. And, activist Sean Strub got Keith Haring to donate his now-famous image of a person fairly dancing out of a closet. The first National Coming Out Day was celebrated with events in 18 states, and national media attention including The Oprah Winfrey Show, CNN, USA Today and National Public Radio.

Lynn Shepodd, who later became a member of HRC's board of governors, was part of that first year's organizing and remembers that the concept wasn't universally popular in the gay community. "There were some who opined that NCOD was an invasion of privacy because the movement had been based on respecting gay peoples' private lives," she says. "It was clear, though, that the community was ready to take its next step and be out. You cannot have an invisible movement."

The next year, National Coming Out Day headquarters moved to Santa Fe, N.M., where Eichberg could oversee it. Pilo Bueno was hired as national coordinator and expanded events marking the day to 21 states — no mean feat without a computer and relying on a mailing list that was handwritten on a lavender pad.

Adapted from:

http://www.hrc.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Coming_Out/Get_Informed4/National_Coming_Out_Day/History/A_History.htm

Behind the Desk: Views from an Intern at the BGSU LGBTQA-Q Resource Center

By Laura K LeFebvre

(Undergraduate at Bowling Green State University)

I received an email that announced the BGSU LGBTQA-Q Resource Center on campus was looking for enthusiastic and hard working interns. At the time, I had been searching for an internship that was close to home, that dealt with my major, and one in which I could have fun at while still learning at work. I had applied for three different internships already, but one at the LGBTQA-Q Resource Center sparked my interest, so I quickly responded to the email. Why did this opportunity spark my interest? I'm a heterosexual female, who feels I am well educated in matters that deal with sexuality and diversity. But often times, when people think they are well educated on a topic, they are surprised to discover there is much they do not know.

The first person I spoke with at the Resource Center was Nicky Damania, the "big boss man" at the center. He was unbelievably nice and very informal during the interview, which made me feel at ease. His friendly nature and enthusiasm made me feel like we had talked before and I could tell him anything about everything. After the initial interview with Nicky, I was given office hours and a project to work on. I was thrown into this internship, but now I feel like it is where I was meant to be. As the weeks progress, I meet more folks in the office; either other interns or workers and have had some interesting conversations with a few. I have been exposed to many different ways of thinking and experiences people have expressed to me. Each person I have spoken with or listened to all seem to have open hearts and minds. So far, this internship has been a lot of hard work, but along with it has come new views, opinions and opportunities to learn from others. I hope that in sharing this story, I can inspire others to open their minds to diversity and LGBT issues that are present in our community. These experiences, and the ones to come, are very beneficial for my personal views and interactions with others.



Who Came Out Over the Past Year?

During the past year, several figures from the worlds of entertainment and politics have publicly revealed that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Some made news, others came out quietly, but the following people are all courageous. We salute them as part of our commemoration of National Coming Out Day.

While many people in Hollywood had known for years that Portia di Rossi was a lesbian, the whole world learned it once she started a romance with Ellen DeGeneres late last year.

The "Ally McBeal" alum and current "Arrested Development" star got caught in the full glare of the tabloids after the news broke, but she kept her cool. She remains a TV star who is known for her talent and beauty; her sexual orientation has become a non-issue.

Stephen Padilla, the mayor of Chula Vista, Calif., discussed his sexuality during a Pride celebration this summer. While many had known he was gay since 1999, the public confirmation gave his city a new distinction: With a population of 220,000, Chula Vista is now the second-largest U.S. city (after neighbor San Diego) with an openly gay mayor. A lifelong San Diego resident and a single father, Padilla has been mayor since 2002 and is seeking re-election next year.

Maya Marcel-Keyes came out under stressful public circumstances: Her father is the conservative commentator and politician Alan Keyes -- the man who recently called Mary Cheney a "selfish hedonist" for being a lesbian.

Despite being cut off financially from her family, Maya spoke out for herself and other LGBT youth without dissing her dad. She also received financial assistance for college from the Point Foundation.

In an interview with the PlanetOut Network, Marcel-Keyes said, "It's difficult to have parents who don't accept you -- everyone wants their parent to accept them and love them for who they are. We can hope that one day our parents will grow to do that, but until then I'd say that it's normal and all right to feel hurt. But don't let it ruin your life.")

"I am gay, and I'm very proud of who I am," Westlife singer Mark Feehily said this summer. "I'm not asking for any sympathy or to be a role model to anyone else." The announcement made headlines in Europe, where Westlife is currently the most popular boy band. The Irish-born pop star is 25, and he is in a relationship with singer Kevin McDonald.

At the beginning of the year, Jeff Howe was "in the closet" in only one realm of his life: as a soldier in Iraq. During the spring, however, he was outed when a superior discovered his online profile, and proceedings began for his dismissal from the U.S. military under the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Howe went public about the dismissal, and his story put a face on the struggles of gays who serve and on the harmfulness of the military's stance toward them.

Lesley Gore, whose hits include "It's My Party (And I'll Cry if I Want To)" and "You Don't Own Me," talked about her sexuality this summer in an interview posted on AfterEllen.com.

Gore has had a partner for 23 years and claims that she has never been very private about her life, but many fans didn't know about her sexuality until this year. She recently hosted "In the Life," a newsmagazine on public television geared to LGBT audiences, and she released a new album in June.

Source: <http://www.planetout.com/content/slideshow/?coll=634&navpath=/news/comingout/>

Coming Out Quotes

Compiled by Maggy Fogler

No matter how far in or out of the closet you are, you still have another step. – Author Unknown

I believe that every single event in life happens in an opportunity to choose love over fear. – Oprah Winfrey

The heart has reasons that reason cannot know. – Blaise Pascal

Closets stand for prisons, not privacy. – Robin Tyler

There is no torment in being out. The torment is in being in. – Armistead Maupin

Pain nourishes courage. You can't be brave if you've only had wonderful things happen to you. – Mary Tyler Moore

I just wish more of my fellow queers would come out sometimes. It's nice out here, you know? --Elton John

Why is it that, as a culture, we are more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands? – Ernest Gaines

If you cannot find peace within yourself, you will never find it anywhere else. – Marvin Gaye

You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection. – Buddha

If homosexuality is a disease, let's all call in queer to work: "Hello. Can't work today, still queer." - Robin Tyler

We love men. We just don't want to see them naked. - Two Nice Girls

Closets stand for prisons, not privacy. –Robin Tyler

It always seemed to me a bit pointless to disapprove of homosexuality. It's like disapproving of rain. - Francis Maud

If homosexuality is a disease, let's all call in queer to work: "Hello. Can't work today, still queer." – Robin Tyler

10 Ways to Get Through Tense Family Gatherings

By Tolerance.org

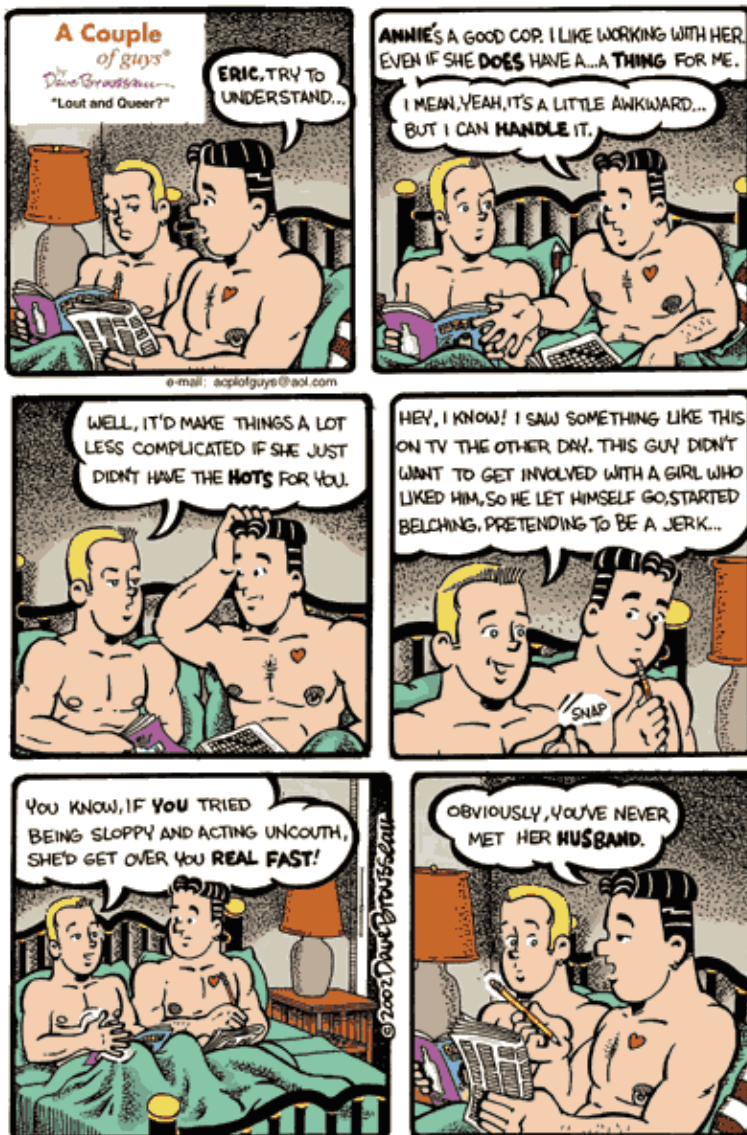
Family rifts during the holidays aren't restricted to the gay and lesbian community. Interfaith and interracial families also feel the sting of ostracism.

Rachna D. Jain, a Maryland psychologist, recalled a client who fit the latter category.

"I worked with a Caucasian woman dating an African-American man, and her family was very uncomfortable with it," Jain said. "She ended up not going home for Thanksgiving. Her family attempted to make her feel guilty about that, but she felt her future was with this man, not with her family of origin."

Regardless of the cause of your familial tension, use the following tips -- compiled by Tolerance.org from experts like Jain -- to address family rifts during the holidays.

1. **Make a list:** When deciding whether to attend a holiday family gathering, make a pro-and-con list, then clear your head, seek a calm moment and decide what is best for you. "Too often, we make ourselves feel horrible about something, get ourselves into the worst possible mental state, and then try to make a great decision," Jain said.
2. **Educate yourself:** Seek out books, brochures and other publications on the issues around which the rift is centered. Offer such materials to other family members. Seek to understand the views of the relative(s) with whom you disagree.
3. **Consider smaller portions:** Plan to visit only for appetizers or only for dessert. Shorten your stay to decrease your discomfort.
4. **Call a friend:** Debrief after the visit with someone you trust.
5. **Adjust your view:** "It feels like us vs. them," Jain said, "but what it really is an ostracized person against a limited belief system. Try to see it that way, and see if that makes it easier to deal with."
6. **Discuss the issue(s):** Family counselor Sharon Ellison, author of "Taking the War Out of Our Words," advises her clients to ask meaningful questions in a relaxed, open, non-defensive manner. "We cannot be fully honest if we're not willing to be vulnerable."
7. **Be prepared:** Recognize that holiday-related emotions may arrive early -- around the time you'd be booking airline tickets, if you were going home -- and linger long after the actual day. Tying emotions (anger, loneliness and so on) to the appropriate source can help you deal with them more effectively.



taken from: <http://www.planetout.com/entertainment/comics/guys/archive/lout.html>

8. **Take care of yourself:** If the atmosphere isn't safe or you know you aren't ready for a possible confrontation, by all means stay away. Find a suitable alternative, gathering with friends, doing volunteer work or pampering yourself.

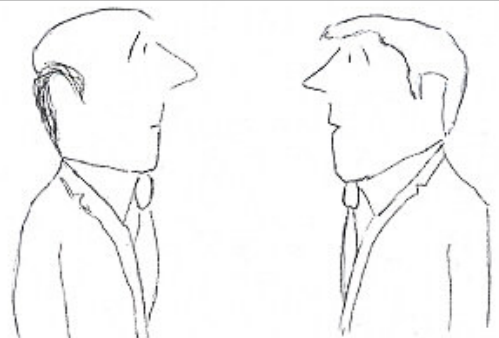
"Ask yourself what you can do on that day that won't involve other people having judgments or power over you," Ellison said.

9. **Be patient:** Real change takes time, and your first or second -- or third or fourth -- efforts at reconciling may feel awkward and unsettled. If the rift still feels irreparable, allow yourself time to grieve, mourning the loss and moving forward from there.

10. **Be gracious:** Jain said people should aim for maturity and compassion in dealing with these situations. "If you're the injured party, and you show grace, people will admire that in you. What you're asking of them is to be tolerant of you. What more powerful way to show that than to be tolerant of them?"

Taken From:

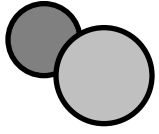
http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=63



"Coming out has been so much fun I'm thinking of going back in the closet so I can do it again."

Taken From: <http://thegaycartoonsite.com>

SOAR Reports



Berdache

By Susan Stryker



Until the 1990s, the word berdache was used in English-language anthropological and ethnographical literature to describe a widely divergent set of social statuses found in many Native American tribal cultures, but which have been largely incomprehensible to Eurocentric observers, who have attempted to describe berdachism as a combination of homosexuality and transvestism. In recent years, Native Americans and the people who study them have proposed the term two-spirit as a more appropriate label.

Berdache is not a Native American term. According to linguist Claude Courouve, the word derives from the Persian bardaj; via European contact with the Muslim world, the word spread by the early sixteenth century to Italian as bardasso, to Spanish as bardaxa or bardaje, and to French as bardache.

Berdache is a relatively recent Anglophonic corruption of this term, which was defined in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French dictionaries as "a young man who is shamefully abused" or "a young man or boy who serves as another's succubus, permitting sodomy to be committed on him."

Early Spanish and French explorers and colonizers in North America applied these terms as a means of making sense of the relationships, anatomical sex, sexual behavior, and social gender role of those individuals they encountered who fell outside their own conceptual frameworks.

Berdachism was well known to anthropologists of North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but discussion of it was most often relegated to footnotes in general texts. Famed anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, a student of Franz Boas and founding figure in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, did extensive ethnographic fieldwork on berdachism among California tribes. This work reportedly informed *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), a popular science fiction novel set on a world with a complex gender system in which individuals

change sex over the course of their life span, which was written by Kroeber's daughter, Ursula K. Le Guin.

Interest in berdachism among gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender scholars began with the publication, in Jonathan N. Katz's *Gay American History* (1976), of several ethnographic descriptions discovered in archival source materials. Over the past several decades, a large body of literature on the phenomenon has been produced by Charles Callender and Lee Kochems, Walter Williams, Will Roscoe, Beatrice Medicine, Evelyn Blackwood, Sabine Lang, and others. Contemporary investigators of two-spirit traditions have documented their existence in 150 tribes for males, and roughly half that number for females. According to Will Roscoe, key features of these traditions include economic specializations (handcrafts and domestic work for males; warfare, hunting, and leadership roles for females); supernatural sanction (in the form of authorization through dreams and visions for adopting the atypical role); and gender variation (relative to normative expectations for males and females in a given society).

Same-sex erotic behavior is no longer considered a definitive marker of two-spirit status, although homosexuality (defined here as sexual relations involving two individuals of the same anatomical sex, regardless of their social gender) is common.

Historically, two-spirit people typically have been well integrated into the life of their tribes, and have often held revered and honored positions within them. Because of homophobia in the dominant cultures of North America, some aspects of two-spirit traditions have been suppressed or lost. Members of native cultures are often quite reluctant to discuss two-spirit traditions with outsiders, who they feel may misunderstand them or appropriate them for their own agendas.

Taken from: <http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/berdache.html>

TransGeneration Sweeps Institutes

By Amanda Monyak

(Undergraduate at Bowling Green State University)

TransGeneration is an 8-part television documentary made by the Sundance Channel that follows four college students for one year. These four college students all have something in common—they're all changing their gender identity. The first episode offered the audience a view of not only college life in general, but how hard it can be when a student is struggling with their gender identity.

Each student was unique and interesting, all from different colleges in the country. The first episode revealed a great deal about each person involved in the documentary. Moments of candor from the students provoked both humor and drama, giving the episode a good balance between light-hearted and serious nature. One thing that many viewers probably did not expect was the strong emphasis on trans medical issues. Some of the students in the documentary had already started to take hormones, and others were considering (or already had) sex reassignment surgery.

Whether one liked the television show or not, everyone can probably agree that it is good for the entertainment industry to be diversifying television. Hopefully TransGeneration will help society become more aware of trans-identity issues. To learn more about TransGeneration, go to:

www.sundancechannel.com/transgeneration



Column: LGBTQ 101

Editorial By Lance Gallop

To my irritation, everyone I meet automatically assumes that I am straight. Of course, I am not actually bothered by this, except on a bemused and superficial level, since - having been out for some time - I am quite comfortable with myself, and anyway if I were concerned with what most people think of me, I would not be a columnist.

However, it is puzzling to me, since I have outed myself in this newspaper on five separate occasions (albeit, usually in fairly subtle ways), and still people who have read my column, and with whom I am otherwise well acquainted, continue to assume my heterosexuality. It seems that I neither look nor act like I should be gay, and this plays a nontrivial role in how some people interpret what I say and do. I wonder if my years at Notre Dame would have been more complicated if I had been less straight-acting.

It is because of these subtle biases, like those that people have about a gay person's appearance, that I fear that the vast majority of people on this campus are not equipped to have a remotely profitable discussion about gays and lesbians, their emerging role in society and the pros and cons of contemporary gay culture. Some lack the proper vocabulary, or have only the most rudimentary idea of what being gay means to a gay person or worst of all, get their stereotypes from Bravo, Showtime or Genesis. Given all of this, it is no wonder that the level of discussion about gays in this paper almost never rises above dogmatism and heterosexist sophistry, with the occasional childish rant.

There is not a great deal that I can do about all this from the vantage of a newspaper, but at the very least I can give a basic lesson in vocabulary and then address one extremely common underlying misunderstanding.

First, for those who find themselves confused, the preferred terms for referring to persons who are attracted (physically, romantically and/or emotionally) to members of the same gender are "gay" (adjective), "gay person" (singular) and "gay people" (plural). These forms are useful because they are gender neutral and implicitly include bisexual subjects; however the gender-specific terms "gay man" and "lesbian" are also acceptable in any situation. The increasingly common term "queer" is slightly more dangerous, since it is still seen as offensive by some. It is usually a synonym for gay, however if used in reference to a person it can also mean "gay in an undefined way."

Obviously terms like "fag," "homo," and "dyke" are always highly offensive. However, the term "homosexual" is also derogatory and should never be used, as many - myself included - increasingly find it offensive. Likewise avoid any propaganda terms like "gay agenda," "avowed homosexual" or "gay lifestyle," which are laced with false assumptions.

Probably the most common, and unfortunate, assumption that people have about gays is that their lives revolve around sex, and that accepting oneself as gay is a fundamentally erotic definition. One would think, to read the opposition, that gay rights is a matter of fighting over who gets to [have sex with] whom and how, and possibly the right to post pornography on billboards outside of grade schools. (Mind you, some of the opposition would consider two women holding hands to be pornography...)

Accepting oneself as gay is a sexual definition, but only for a given value of "sex." Sexuality is a profoundly holistic concept that touches every aspect of life. For example, Notre Dame's basic social building block is the gender-segregated dorm, and the most intimate passages in the Hebrew Scriptures frame spirituality as a conjugal union with God. Sexuality runs more broadly and more deeply through the human person than many are willing to admit.

It is also more complex. Consider the definition of a gay person I gave earlier: someone who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to the same gender. Psychologists distinguish between physical and emotional attraction, which together make up most of a person's sexual orientation. Emotional attraction is the desire to build a lasting and intimate relationship with another person.

It may surprise you to learn that there are a growing number of people, some of them gay, who refer to themselves as asexual and who are not physically attracted to others in the classical sense. Yet these people are still compelled to seek out lasting and intimate relationships with others - certainly ones that go beyond mere friendship - even though the relationships have little, if anything, to do with physical sexuality. This is an example of emotional attraction operating independently of physical attraction.

My point in all of this is that the landscape of human sexuality, for both gay and straight people, is more complicated than is usually appreciated. It defies simple or narrow definitions and touches many different aspects of a person's life.

On a side note, Tuesday, Oct. 11 is National Coming Out Day. If you are planning on making an entrance, I wish you the best; if you are not - well, consider it.

Lance Gallop is a 2005 graduate of Notre Dame. His column appears every other Wednesday. He can be contacted at comments@tidewaterblues.com

Taken from: <http://www.ndsmcobserver.com/media/paper660/news/2005/10/05/Viewpoint/Lgbtq.101-1009125.shtml>

Two Teens Charged in Alleged Hate Crime

BY CALEB HALE

CARBONDALE - Southern Illinois University Carbondale police have charged two suspects in an alleged hate crime against a student last month.

David Michael Goldberg and Joseph Vincent Fuentes are accused of breaking into SIUC freshman Michael McDonnell's Wright Hall dormitory room Sept. 24, ransacking the area and writing anti-gay messages on the door. Both Goldberg and Fuentes are 18 years old and are from Midlothian, a suburb of Chicago.

As of Friday afternoon, Goldberg had posted the required \$750 bond to get out of jail. Fuentes was still being held, Jackson County Jail officials said.

Goldberg is a pre-law freshman at the university. Fuentes is a freshman in pre-physical therapy. SIUC officials say the incident represents the first hate crime based on sexual orientation reported on campus in a decade.

The incident comes at a time when administrators, faculty and students are trying to create a safer environment for gay and lesbian students. SIUC is recognizing Gays, Lesbians, Bisexual and Transgender Awareness Month for October. McDonnell was moved to a private room in a different residence hall immediately after the incident. According to statements he made to SIUC's student newspaper, The Daily Egyptian, McDonnell will take legal action against those found to be involved in the alleged hate crime.

Taken From: <http://www.southernillinoisan.com/articles/2005/10/08/top/10000144.txt>

SOAR Reports

Monday, November 7, 2005

Quote from a Starbucks Coffee Cup:

The Way I See It #43

My Only regret about being gay is that I repressed it for so long. I surrendered my youth to the people I feared when I could have been out there living someone. Don't make that mistake yourself. Life's too damn short.

~ Armistead Maupin
Author of the Tales of the City series
and the novel The Night Listener

Kyle Oldham (North Central College) and Nicky Damania (Bowling Green State University) are hosting an interactive workshop about the phenomenon of *Brothers on the Down Low*, in a presentation entitled

Brothers on the Down Low: Addressing and Educating our Students.

The workshop will incorporate myths, secrecy, honesty, and a discussion about our students in a Black community. The workshop will also discuss J.L. King's book "*On the Down Low: A Journey Into the Lives of 'Straight' Black Men Who Sleep With Men*," who wrote about the secret life of African American men. Black men on the DL seek a strictly physical sexual relationship with their secret male partners while remaining in more traditional arrangements with women. How does this phenomenon related to our students? How can we as Student Affairs Professionals help and educate our students about the seriousness of this phenomenon.

Session 1 at 8:30 am in Ballroom 9

SOAR Programs

Tuesday, November 8, 2005

Brian Hinterscher (University of Southern Indiana) and Nicky Damania (Bowling Green State University) presents:

Having Strength & Courage to Inspire and Be Inspired: Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Survivors

One of your staff members...your colleagues...your administrative assistant...your custodial/ maintenance person...your residents; any of these people could be a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault. This session will inform you about similarities/differences of domestic violence and sexual assault within both heterosexual and gay/lesbian relationships, how survivors use their voice to provide strength and courage to others and how you can empower survivors. Having Strength & Courage to Inspire and Be Inspired: Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Survivors

Session 5 at 8:30 am in Ballroom 1

Jennifer Bannon, Ball State University, and Nelson Gomez-Guzman, Illinois State University, presents:

GLBT - Understanding the T

Transgender identity is a topic that is not discussed about a lot of the time. Take the time to educate yourself on transgender issues relating to our students.

Session 5 at 8:30 am in Denver

Eric Price, Southern Illinois University, and Rachelle Crowder, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, presents:

I Have A Secret

"I Have A Secret" are four words we will all hear in our careers. But, what happens if the secrets that our residents tell us are awkward to ourselves and our staff members? This program delves into the issue of coming out of the closet. Every individual has to reach their sexual identity on their own path. We will discuss techniques to use in these various situations in order to help our residents in the best way possible.

Session 6 at 2 pm in Denver

Theory Corner

Cass Model of Gay and Lesbian Identity Formation

Coming-Out is a life long process of exploring one's sexual orientation and Gay/Lesbian identity and sharing it with family, friends, co-workers, and the world. Coming-Out means recognizing, accepting, expressing, and sharing one's sexual orientation with oneself and others.

Identity Confusion – Personalization of information regarding sexuality.

- Recognizes thought/behaviors as homosexual, usually finds this unacceptable
- Redefines meaning of behaviors
- Seeks information on homosexuality

Identity Comparison – Accepts possibility she/he might be homosexual.

- Feels positive about being different, exhibits this in ways beyond orientation
- Accepts behavior as homosexual, rejects homosexual identity
- Accepts identity but inhibits behavior (ex: heterosexual marriage/anonymous sex)

Identity Tolerance – Accepts probability of being homosexual and recognizes sexual/social/emotional needs of being homosexual.

- Seeks out meeting other Gay/Lesbian people through groups, bars, etc.
- Personal experience builds sense of community, positively and negatively

Identity Acceptance – Accepts (vs. tolerates) homosexual self-image and has increased contact with Gay/Lesbian subculture and less with heterosexuals.

- Increased anger toward anti-gay society
- Greater self – acceptance

Identity Pride – Immersed in Gay/Lesbian subculture, less interaction with heterosexuals. Views world divided as “gay” or “not gay”.

- Confrontation with heterosexual establishment
- Disclosure to family and co-workers

Identity Synthesis – Gay/Lesbian identity integrated with other aspects.

- Recognizes supportive heterosexual
- Sexual identity still important but not primary factor in relationships with others

Adapted from “Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model” by Vivienne C. Cass from the Journal Of Homosexuality. Vol 4 (3), Spring 1979

D’Augelli’s Model of Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Identity Development

D’Augelli identified six interactive processes (not stages) involved in lesbian, gay, and bisexual identity development.

Exiting heterosexual identity

Recognition that one’s feelings and attractions are not heterosexual as well as telling others that one is lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Developing a personal lesbian/gay/bisexual identity status

A “sense of personal socio-affective stability that effectively summarizes thoughts, feelings, and desires” (D’Augelli 1994).

One must also challenge internalized myths about what it means to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Developing a personal identity status must be done in relationship with others who can confirm ideas about what it means to be nonheterosexual.

Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity

Creating a support network of people who know and accept one’s sexual orientation.

Realizing people’s true reactions can take time. Reactions may also change over time and with changing circumstances.

Becoming a lesbian/gay/bisexual offspring

Disclosing one’s identity to parents and redefining one’s relationship after such disclosure.

D’Augelli noted that establishing a positive relationship with one’s parents can take time but is possible with education and patience.

This developmental process is particularly troublesome for many college students who depend on their parents for financial as well as emotional support.

Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual intimacy status

This is a more complex process than achieving an intimate heterosexual relationship because of the invisibility of lesbian and gay couples in our society.

“The lack of cultural scripts directly applicable to lesbian/gay/bisexual people leads to ambiguity and uncertainty, but it also forces the emergence of personal, couple-specific, and community norms, which should be more personally adaptive” (D’Augelli, 1994).

Entering a lesbian/gay/bisexual community

Making varying degrees of commitment to social and political action.

Some individuals never take this step; others do so only at great personal risk, such as losing their jobs or housing.

Adapted from: Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice (pp. 96-98). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

What is Sex?

- Refers to the cluster of biological, chromosomal, and anatomical features associated with maleness and femaleness in the human body

What is Gender?

- Gender is separate from biological sex. Gender is a combination of behavioral, cultural, and psychological traits that are typically associated with one sex or the other.
- Gender is used to classify individuals as being male, female, both, or neither
- A complicated set of socio-cultural practices whereby human bodies are transformed into “men” and “women”
- Refers to that which a society deems “masculine” or “feminine”

What is Gender Identity?

- The internal sense of one’s own gender, which is typically male or female in accordance with one’s biological sex

Gender vs. sex

- Although the two terms are related, they should be defined separately to differentiate
- The biological (“sex”) from
- The socio-cultural (“gender”)

www.genderpsychology.org
www.gender.org

Toward a Policy on Gender Identity. Ontario
 Human Rights Commission

www.ohrc.on.ca/english/consultation/gender-identity-discussion-paper.shtml

What does it mean to be a Transgender individual?

- A person’s gender identity differs from the strict expectations of their biological sex as assigned at birth
- A transgender individual is someone whose gender identity differs from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity.

What does it mean to be a Transsexual individual?

- A transsexual individual is an individual who strongly dis-identifies with their birth sex and wishes to utilize hormones and sex reassignment surgery (or gender confirmation surgery) as a way to align their physical body with their internal gender identity
- A transsexual individual can be male-to-female or female-to-male

Adapted from: www.hbiqda.org/soc.cfm

Hot Seat Questions About Transgender Individuals

Aren’t transgender individuals just flamboyant homosexuals?

Some are gay, lesbian or bisexual, but most transgender individuals consider themselves to be heterosexual. However, transgender individuals are often perceived as gay, and thus are discriminated against in similar ways.

Aren’t transgender individuals mainly prostitutes and shoplifters?

Transgender individuals are mainly law-abiding, hardworking folks who pay their taxes, own homes, and support their young children and aging parents. Some are doctors or lawyers, and some are sex workers or thieves. All transgender individuals, however, suffer unfairly from society’s pervasive stigmatization of them. Judging them on that basis is like judging other minorities using common negative stereotypes.

What makes a transgendered person want to change sex?

Very few transgender individuals actually go through sex reassignment surgery (SRS). Only transsexual people do this, and many of them cannot afford the costs of these surgeries. Most transgender individuals do not want to change their anatomical sex, but many modify their bodies by taking hormones or by undergoing various cosmetic procedures.

Aren’t transsexuals just men who want to be women?

There may be just as many transsexual men and people born with female bodies who feel their gender identity or expression is masculine. The Female-To-Male (FTM) half of the transgendered community ranges from stone butch lesbians and passing women to transsexual men, who go through hormonal and surgical transformation of their bodies.

Isn’t a “man in a dress” just out to solicit sex from other men?

Some are. Most aren’t. Many cross-dressing males are heterosexual, married men who are faithful to their wives. This common misconception is due to the media’s mislabeling of any man who appears cross dressed in public as a gay prostitute. Most cross dressers are simply being themselves and have no interest in having sex with other men.

Aren’t transgender individuals just drag queens?

Some are. Most aren’t. Drag queens and kings cross-dress as performance art. It’s a common mistake to confuse drag queens and kings, who receive a great deal of media attention, with those who cross-dress for gender identity reasons. Drag performers, whose flamboyant personas are part of their acts, practice the art of female or male illusion. Many do not self-identify as transgendered.

Are Transgender individuals Gay?

Most transgender individuals identify themselves as heterosexual. Their intrinsic difference is their gender identity, not their sexual identity.

© 2001 Gender Education and Advocacy, Inc. *GEA is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of all gender variant people regardless of their social identities*



Straight But Not Narrow: How to Be an Ally to Queer People

- Use the words "gay" and "lesbian" instead of "homosexual." The overwhelming majority of gay men and lesbians do not identify with or use the word "homosexual" to describe them.
- Use non-gender specific language. Ask "Are you seeing someone?" or "Are you in a committed relationship?" instead of "Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?" or "Are you married?" Use the word "partner" or "significant other" instead of "boyfriend/girlfriend" or "husband/wife."
- Do not assume the sexual orientation of another person even when that person is married or in a committed relationship. Many bisexuals, and even some gay men and lesbians, are in heterosexual relationships. And don't assume that someone who is transgender is gay or that the person will seek to transition to become heterosexual.
- Do not assume that a queer person is attracted to you just because they have disclosed their sexual identity. If any interest is shown, be flattered, not flustered. Treat any interest that someone might show just as you would if it came from someone who is heterosexual.
- Challenge your own conceptions about gender-appropriate roles and behaviors. Do not expect people to conform to society's beliefs about "women" and "men."
- Validate people's gender expression. For example, if a male-born person identifies as female, refer to that person as "she" and use her chosen name. If you are unsure how to refer to a person's gender, simply ask that person.
- Speak out against statements and jokes that attack Queer people. Letting others know that you find anti-gay statements and jokes offensive and unacceptable can go a long way toward reducing homophobia.
- Educate yourself about Queer history, culture, and concerns. Read GLBT publications such as Ohio State's Queer Quarterly, Columbus's Stonewall Journal and Outlook News, and Ohio's Gay People's Chronicle. See movies that are by and about Queer individuals. Attend events promoted by the Queer communities.
- Raise Queer issues, concerns, and experiences in your family, workplace, school, religious community, and neighborhood. Educate children about families that have two moms or two dads.
- Support and involve yourself in queer organizations and causes. Donate money or volunteer time to queer organizations. Write letters to your political representatives asking them to support legislation that positively affects Queer people. March in Columbus's annual Queer Pride Parade.

Adapted from the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Rochester, NY

Ideas for Allies

- A Starter List of Things You Can Do to Be Supportive, Confront Homophobia, and Resist Heterosexism
- Refuse to tolerate anti-lesbian, -gay, or -bisexual comments, attitudes, remarks or jokes.
- Ask others that any anti-lesbian, -gay, or -bisexual humor displayed in common areas be removed completely or placed within private office or living spaces.
- Report all harassment or discriminatory behavior to the appropriate officials.
- Display positive materials in support of people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- Have available referral information for services which people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual might need.
- Do not assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual.
- Use inclusive, non-gender specific language that does not assume heterosexuality in others. Use inclusive language in conversation and also in written materials, policies, forms, etc.
- Educate yourself on issues and concerns for people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Take the initiative to obtain accurate information.
- Attend events, meetings, or programs sponsored by or for people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- Gain insight by talking to people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Learn from their experiences.
- Maintain a balanced perspective.
- Don't assume that being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is so hard and presents so many problems that you should feel sorry for people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- Don't assume that being lesbian, gay, or bisexual doesn't matter.
- Respect confidentiality at all times. It is imperative that you can be trusted.
- Examine your own biases and fears.
- Know your own limits.
- Don't be surprised when someone comes out to you. Deal with feelings first. You can be helpful just by listening and providing someone a chance to talk about their feelings and their experience.
- Provide positive reinforcement to people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual to help counter the messages of shame and guilt about homosexuality that are so prevalent in society.
- Assume that in any setting (e.g. workplace, organization meeting, residence hall, etc.) there are people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual who are wondering how safe the environment is for them. Provide safety by making clear your support of people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- Include lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues and topics in training seminars, curricula, programming, professional development workshops, etc. when appropriate.

SOAR Reports

Translating Identity Conference

February 24th – 26th, 2006

University of Vermont

Burlington, VT

(802) 656-0699

tic@uvm.edu

<http://www.uvm.edu/~tic/abouttic.html>



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outgames2006@hotmail.com

<http://www.montreal2006.org/home.htm>

Conferences

CMAI's LGBTQA-Q Resource Center at Bowling Green State University will be hosting a one-day symposium:

THE INTERSECTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE BIBLE

Individual presentations will inform audience the facts on both sides of the debate and then a two-hour facilitated open forum discussion will be lead.

Date: TBA in the month of February
From: 9am to 5pm

For more information please contact

Nicky at (419) 372-3244

Email: rainbow@bgsu.edu

Website: <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/cmai>



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SOAR Reports was created and compiled by Nicky P. Damania (Bowling Green State University) for the 2006 GLACUHO Conference