

# D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Development

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Dr. Anthony D'Augelli, University of Connecticut Professor of Human Development, 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-affectional 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 non-heterosexual.

**Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity** - Creating a support network of people who know and accept one's sexual orientation. Determining 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."

**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: University of Georgia's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Resource Center materials**