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Edited August, 2011

What is IWU Safe Zone?

IWU Safe Zone is a program which identifies "gay friendly" faculty, staff, and students to provide support and resources for IWU lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT*) community members. The IWU Safe Zone symbol is a message to LGBT students and colleagues that you are an understanding, supportive, and trustworthy ally. LGBT individuals will know they can come to IWU Safe Zone members for help, advice, or just to talk with someone who is supportive of their sexual orientation.

Posting the IWU Safe Zone symbol in your area also means that homophobic and heterosexist comments and actions will not be tolerated, but will be addressed in an educational and informative manner. Colleagues and students have a right to their opinion and deeply held beliefs; however, if someone is stating myths or misinformation about lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individuals, IWU Safe Zone members will connect them to more accurate information in a respectful manner.



What Does the IWU Safe Zone Symbol Represent?

The symbol represents the LGBT student, faculty, or staff member within the safety of the circle and the embrace of open support on the Illinois Wesleyan campus. The rainbow triangle is a common symbol among the LGBT community and is adopted for IWU Safe Zone. IWU community members understand that the individual displaying the symbol has participated in IWU Safe Zone trainings and is committed to eliminating homophobia and heterosexism from the campus.

**LGBT=Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. The letters in the acronym are often interchanged depending on the organization/person using the acronym. GLBT is also a common order. Many acronyms also include more letters to represent different populations. (Example: Q may be added to include "queer" or "questioning" individuals.)*

How to Use Your Resources

This manual is a resource for all IWU Safe Zone members and those interested in learning more about LGBT advocacy. We encourage each of you to take time to read this entire booklet. All of the documents in this manual can also be found online at: <http://www.iwu.edu/multicultural/index.shtml>. It represents a small amount of information available on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. IWU Safe Zone is an ongoing program. Therefore, we encourage you to forward new and pertinent information to the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at any time so that it may be shared with others in the program through campus mail or email.

The IWU Safe Zone logo decal is meant to be posted to your office door, within your workspace, on your residence hall door, on a class folder, or any other such place where IWU community members can publicly view it. When posting the cardstock logo, make sure to use adhesive material (tape) that will not damage or leave marks on the surface/wall/door. If your logo decal is ever vandalized or torn down, take a picture of the vandalism/remaining parts, remove any remnants, and immediately contact the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at (309) 556-3412 for a replacement. You may then be advised to file a bias incident report depending on the circumstance.

The button and wristband should be worn at campus events, during LGBT awareness weeks, on National Coming Out Day (October 11), on book bags, during IWU Pride Alliance meetings, or anytime/anywhere you want to wear them. All other take-away items should be used throughout your daily lives.

The IWU Safe Zone listserv is a private e-mail listserv that is available to all IWU Safe Zone members which is not available to the general public. It is an excellent medium for you to gain further information and post messages about your experiences as an IWU Safe Zone member. The listserv is intended to help members keep in contact with everyone and share experiences and information in a confidential, easy, and environmentally friendly way. If you would like to correspond with other IWU Safe Zone members using the listserv, email your request/message to mcaffairs@iwu.edu. All program participants will receive new information, updates, and event opportunities from the IWU Safe Zone Committee at least once a month through the email listserv.

The IWU Safe Zone Committee is always available to answer questions or give advice. Forward any questions or concerns to mcaffairs@iwu.edu or call any member of the committee.

Guidelines for IWU Safe Zone Members

- 1. Respect each individual's privacy.** Keep contacts confidential unless otherwise specified.
- 2. Keep in mind the D'Augelli Model of Sexual Identity.** Try to use language that reflects where the person is in his/her development. (Example: A student may be exploring his/her sexuality and may not identify self as a LGBT person even though she/he is engaging in same-sex relationships.)
- 3. Keep clear, professional boundaries.** You may find yourself being an advocate, advisor, teacher, or mentor to students/colleagues who seek your support. Feel free to have coffee or lunch with those who seek you out. However, the formation of romantic or sexual relationships between you and those you encounter due to your membership with the IWU Safe Zone Program is strictly prohibited.
- 4. Ask questions.** Please feel free to consult with the Safe Zone Committee members or the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs whenever you have questions or would like feedback on how to support or advise someone.
- 5. Refer students to professional counseling when appropriate.** If an individual is experiencing psychological distress or having difficulty coping, suggest that counseling may be helpful to her/him. Also, if you are feeling overwhelmed or worried about an individual, you can refer them to Counseling and Consultation Services.
- 6. Keep the logo visible.** If your Safe Zone logo decal is defaced or torn down, take a picture of the vandalism/remaining parts and contact the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs immediately for a new copy. Also, submit a bias incident report to Campus Security at ext. 1111.
- 7. Keep us notified.** Please notify the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs if you have changes of address, email, or want to withdraw from the program.
- 8. Keep resources and new materials easily accessible.** Resources may be periodically sent to you via campus mail. There is a limited amount of hard-copied resources; so, please keep them safe and readily available. It is permissible to copy or print IWU Safe Zone materials.

**Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (Holmes 103-D)
(309) 556-3412 or mcaffairs@iwu.edu**

**Counseling and Consultation Services (Magill Lower Level)
(309) 556-3052**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally General Definitions

Ally - A person who supports and respects sexual and gender diversity, acts accordingly to interrupt and challenge homophobic and heterosexist remarks/behaviors, and is willing to explore these forms of bias within her/himself.

Bisexual - A man or woman with a sexual and affectional or emotional orientation toward people of both sexes. Bisexual men and women have sexual and romantic attractions to both men and women. Depending upon the person, his or her attraction may be stronger to women or to men, or they may be approximately equal. A bisexual person may have had sex with people of both sexes, or only of one sex, or he or she may never have had sex at all. It is important to note that some people who have sex with both men and women do not consider themselves bisexual. Bisexuals are also referred to as "bi."

Closeted - Not being open about one's sexual orientation or gender identity. Usually used for LGBT people who have not "come out" to others.

Coming Out - Refers to the experiences of some, but not all, LGBT people as they explore their sexual identity and tell others about their sexual orientation. There is no correct process or single way to come out, and some LGBT individuals choose not to come out. The process is unique for each individual, and it is the choice of the individual.

FTM or MTF - Female to Male or Male to Female - Terms used to describe a person's transition from one sex to another.

Gay - 1. Term sometimes used to refer to a homosexual person of either sex. For example, some lesbians identify as "gay." However, "gay" most commonly refers to men who primarily have emotional and sexual attraction to men. Self-identified gay men do not necessarily have sex only with men, but may occasionally engage in sex with women.

2. A man whose primary sexual and romantic attraction is to other men. He may have sex with men currently or may have had sex with men in the past. A smaller number of gay men may never have had sex with another man for many reasons such as age, societal pressures, lack of opportunity, fear of discrimination, but nonetheless realize that their sexual attraction is mainly to other men. Some gay men have sex with women and some don't. It is important to note that some men who have sex with other men, sometimes exclusively, may not call themselves gay.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally General Definitions (con't)

Gay (con't) - 3. An inclusive term encompassing gay men, lesbians, bisexual people, and sometimes even transgender people. However, this has become less common, and "gay" is usually used to refer only to gay men. The term is still often used in the broader sense for LGBT events, as in "The Gay Pride Parade."

Gender Identity - A person's sense of self as being either male or female. Gender identity does not always match biological sex. For example: a person may be born biologically male yet have a female gender identity. At birth, we are assigned one of two sexes, usually based on our visible genitals. For many people, this sex assignment fits and feels comfortable and they never think about it further. Others do not feel as comfortable with their assigned sex, either because they find the two-sex binary system too limiting or because they feel greater identification with the sex opposite that to which they were assigned at birth. People deal with this discomfort in many ways, sometimes only in personal ways, and sometimes in ways visible to others.

Gender Role - How "masculine" or "feminine" an individual acts. Societies commonly have norms regarding how men and women should behave. Although the argument is made that dominant normative behavior is a dynamic, often evolving, process.

Gender-variant - Displaying gender traits that are normatively more typical of the opposite biological sex. "Feminine" behavior or appearance in men is gender-variant as is "masculine" behavior or appearance in women. Gender-variant behavior is culturally specific.

LGBT - Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

Hate Crime - Hate crime legislation defines a hate crime as an act committed on the basis of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person. Hate crimes, or bias-motivated crimes, are defined as offenses motivated by hatred against a victim based on his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, ethnicity, or national origin.

Heterosexism - Belief that heterosexuality is the only "natural" sexuality and that it is inherently healthier or superior to other types of sexuality. An ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior. Condone discriminatory practices and violence against LGBT individuals and creates unique developmental challenges otherwise not present, such as overcoming internalized homophobia and coming out.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally General Definitions (con't)

Heterosexual - Individual with a primary sexual or emotional attraction toward persons of the opposite sex. A man or woman whose primary sexual and romantic attraction is to people of the other sex. She or he may or may not have had sex with another person, but still realize that his/her sexual attraction is mainly to people of the other sex. Some people who consider themselves heterosexual have or have had sexual contact with people of the same sex. Heterosexuals are sometimes referred to as "straight."

Homophobia - Irrational fear or hatred of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people. The responses of fear, disgust, anger, discomfort, and aversion that individuals experience in dealing with gay people. Often is manifested in the form of discrimination and prejudice.

Homosexual - Individual with a primary sexual and affectional orientation or emotional attraction toward persons of the same sex. Male homosexuals are often referred to as "gay," whereas female homosexuals are referred to as "lesbians."

HRC - Human Rights Campaign - A political action group in Washington D.C. that works for equal rights for LGB people.

Intersex - An intersexual person is born between (inter) sexes, having partially or fully developed pairs of female and male sex organs.

Lesbian - A woman with a primary sexual and affectional orientation or emotional attraction towards other women. Sometimes a lesbian engages in sexual behaviors with men, even though she may self-identify as lesbian. She may have sex with women currently or may have had sex with women in the past. Some lesbians may never have had sex with another woman for a host of reasons (age, societal pressures, lack of opportunity, fear of discrimination), but nonetheless realize that their sexual attraction is mainly to other women. It is important to note that some women who have sex with other women, sometimes exclusively, may not call themselves lesbians.

National Coming Out Day - On October 11, 1987, LGBT people from across the U.S. marched through Washington, D.C. to call attention to the need for gay rights. It was the first gay march on Washington and thought to be one of the largest marches ever. Since then, every October 11th has been a day of celebrating visibility and pride amongst LGBT people and their allies.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally General Definitions (con't)

NGLTF - National Gay and Lesbian Task Force - A national progressive organization working for the civil rights of LGB people, with the vision and commitment to building a powerful political movement.

Oppression – Very simply, the systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group with access to power, the result of which benefits the group in power. Maintained by social beliefs and practices. Extremely complex issue.

Out or Out of the Closet - Refers to varying degrees of being open about one's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Outing – Involuntary disclosure by someone else of one's sexual orientation or gender identity. Often it is politically motivated or intended to harm.

Pansexual – Also called omnisexual. Attracted to all sexes, genders, and forms of sexuality equally. Exhibiting many forms of sexual expression.

PFLAG - Parents and Families/friends of Lesbians and Gays - One of the most active parent/family organizations in the country that serves to support their LGBT sons and daughters, fight oppression, and stand up for LGBT rights.

Queer – 1. A gender and/or sexual non-conformist label for those who resist heteronormative social structures.
2. A reclaimed word and concept that has been used as a pejorative by some. For some, it is a political identity.

Rainbow Flag - The LGBT Rainbow Freedom Flag was designed in the late 1970's to designate the great diversity of the LGBT community. It has been recognized by the International Flag makers Association as the official flag of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights movement.

Sexual Identity – How people understand themselves as sexual beings. A few labels are "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," "bi," "queer," "questioning," "undecided," "heterosexual," "straight," and "asexual." Sexual identity evolves through a multistage developmental process, which varies in intensity and duration depending on the individual. Sexual identity also refers to a person's erotic and affectional response to another with respect to gender: heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or transgender. A consistent, enduring self-recognition of the meanings that sexual orientation and sexual behavior have had for an individual.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally General Definitions (con't)

Sexual Identity Development or Foundation - The process of coming to recognize one's attraction to members of one or both sexes and to define or label oneself on the basis of that attraction. A process that evolves over time rather than a decision one makes at a particular point in time. The way in which one views oneself as a sexual being and chooses to present oneself may change significantly over the lifespan, particularly for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Individuals born in this society are presumed to be heterosexual, learning the norms and expectations related to heterosexuality. Thus, developing an alternative identity requires two processes: letting go of an ingrained heterosexual identity and learning what it means to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Given the heterosexist and homophobic society in which we live, neither process is easy. Because the relative anonymity of the college environment presents an opportunity to redefine oneself away from family monitoring, the two tasks of exiting heterosexuality and developing a new identity become real possibilities for the first time in many college students' lives.

Sexual Orientation - Sexual orientation refers to one's sexual and romantic attraction. Those whose sexual orientation is to people of the opposite sex are called "heterosexual." Those whose sexual orientation is to people of the same sex are called "homosexual" (or lesbian or gay), and those whose sexual orientation is to people of both sexes are called "bisexual." The term "sexual preference" is misleading because it implies that this attraction is a choice rather than an intrinsic personal characteristic. Sexual orientation is not necessarily the same as sexual behavior.

Significant Other – Other labels include: life partner, domestic partner, lover, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Because same sex couples are not allowed to marry legally in most of the United States, "significant other" is often equivalent to the term "spouse" for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

SRS -SRS stands for Sex Reassignment Surgery, a series of surgeries that facilitate the physical transition from one biological sex to another.

Straight - A term often used to identify persons who are thought to be heterosexual.

Stereotype – A preconceived or over-simplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard to individual differences.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally General Definitions (con't)

Transgender - 1. A broad term for all individuals whose biological sex and gender identity are incongruent. For example, a person who is biologically female-bodied may experience their gender identity as male.

2. An umbrella term for people who are gender non-conformist such as transsexuals, cross-dressers, people who are intersex, etc. Transgender is not the same as sexual orientation, and transgender people may identify along the continuum of sexual orientations. Being transgender stems from understanding and accepting the authenticity of one's gender identity.

Transphobia - The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.

Transition - A complicated, multi-step process that can take years as transsexuals align their gender anatomy with their gender identity.

Transsexual - Individual whose gender identity is that of the opposite sex. There are female-to-male and male-to-female transsexuals. Transition may or may not include sex reassignment surgery (SRS). Individuals may or may not choose SRS because of various reasons such as financial support or limitations, health considerations, cultural barriers, personal choice, etc.

***Many definitions provided by Appalachian State University**

Things to Remember When Working with LGBT Students and Colleagues

- 1. Don't be surprised when someone comes out to you.** Some people may not have had same-sex relationships in the past. Do not act shocked when an individual says that he/she is gay or a lesbian. Do not assume that their sexual orientation is “new” just because you were unaware of it.
- 2. Respect confidentiality.** It is imperative that you can be trusted.
- 3. Be informed.** Most of us are products of a homophobic society. It is important that you are aware of the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and colleagues.
- 4. Examine your own biases.** If you are uncomfortable with dealing with a particular issue, and know that you are unable to be open and accepting, refer the individual to another IWU Safe Zone member.
- 5. Know when and where to seek help.** Know all available resources. Use your membership to the e-mail listserv, IWU Safe Zone website, this manual, other IWU Safe Zone members, etc. to ask for advice.
- 6. Maintain a balanced perspective.** Sexual and romantic thoughts and feelings are only one part of a person's self. Do not assume that a person's sexual orientation is the most important part of his/her identity.
- 7. Understand the meaning of "sexual orientation."** Each person's sexual orientation is natural to that person.
- 8. Deal with feelings first.** You sometimes can be helpful by just listening and allowing a LGBT person the opportunity to share feelings.
- 9. Be helpful, not forceful.** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people need to move at the pace they feel most comfortable with. Do not try to force them to confront situations or come out before they are ready.
- 10. Remind them that they are not alone.** Share with them that others on campus may be facing similar issues. Refer them to supportive groups like the IWU Pride Alliance—meets every Thursday night at 9pm in Evelyn Chapel.
- 11. Don't try to guess who is a LGBT person.** Trying to categorize individuals based on mannerisms, appearance, etc. is inappropriate because it depends on, and reinforces, stereotypes. Moreover, some do not want to be labeled based on their sexual or romantic relationships.

How Homophobia Hurts Us All

You do not have to be a LGBT person, or know someone who is, to be negatively affected by homophobia. Though homophobia actively oppresses LGBT people, it also hurts heterosexuals.

Homophobia:

1. Inhibits the ability of heterosexuals to form close, intimate relationships with members of their own sex, for fear of being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
2. Locks people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self expression.
3. Is often used to stigmatize heterosexuals, those perceived or labeled by others to be LGBT, children of LGBT parents, parents of LGBT children, and friends of LGBT people.
4. Compromises human integrity by pressuring people to treat others badly, actions that are contrary to their basic humanity.
5. Combined with sex-phobia, results in the invisibility or erasure of LGBT lives and sexuality in school-based sex education discussions, keeping vital information from students. Such erasures can kill people in the age of AIDS.
6. Is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chances of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted infections. Young people, of all sexual identities, are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are "normal."
7. Prevents some LGBT people from developing an authentic self identity and adds to the pressure to marry, which in turn places undue stress and often times trauma on themselves as well as their heterosexual spouses, and their children.
8. Inhibits appreciation of other types of diversity, making it unsafe for everyone because each person has unique traits not considered mainstream or dominant. We are all diminished when any one of us is demeaned.

By challenging homophobia, people are not only fighting oppression for specific groups of people, but are striving for a society that accepts and celebrates the differences in all of us.

***For more about this topic, see Warren J. Blumenfeld, *Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992)**

Assessing Your Homophobia

Homophobia may be defined as an unrealistic fear of, or generalized negative attitude toward, homosexual people. Homophobia may be experienced and expressed by LGBT individuals as well as by heterosexuals. The following assessment should be used for self reflection and to foster discussion.

Responses reflect your own experiences and may bring to the surface some internalized homophobia. However, answering yes to some of these questions does not necessarily mean that you are a “homophobe” or cannot learn to be a good ally. If you do answer yes to any of these questions, ask yourself why and seek out facts to clear up any misconceptions or unwarranted anxieties.

1. Do you stop yourself from doing or saying certain things because someone might think you're gay or lesbian? If yes, what things?
2. Do you ever intentionally do or say things so that people will think you're non-gay?
3. Do you believe that gays or lesbians can influence others to become homosexual? If you are non-gay, do you think a homosexual person could influence you to change your sexual orientation?
4. If you are a parent, how would you (or do you) feel about having a lesbian daughter or a gay son?
5. How would feel if you discovered that a parent, parent figure, or close family member was homosexual?
6. Are there any jobs, positions, or professions that you think LGBT people should be barred from holding or entering?
7. Would you avoid a physician whom you knew or believed to be gay or lesbian if that person were of the same gender as you?
8. If someone you care about were to say to you, "I think I'm gay," would you stop hanging around that person?
9. Would you be offended if a homosexual person of the same gender asked you on a date?
10. Have you ever laughed at or made a "queer" joke?

Riddle Homophobia Scale

Below are listed four negative homophobic levels and four positive levels of attitudes towards lesbian and gay relationships/people. They were developed by Dr. Dorothy Riddle, a psychologist from Tucson, Arizona.

Homophobic Levels of Attitude

- 1. Repulsion:** Homosexuality is seen as a "crime against nature". Gay/lesbians are sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc. Anything is justified to change them: prison, hospitalization, negative behavior therapy, electroshock therapy.
- 2. Pity:** Heterosexual chauvinism. Heterosexuality is more mature and certainly to be preferred. Any possibility of "becoming straight" should be reinforced, and those who seem to be born "that way" should be pitied, "the poor dears".
- 3. Tolerance:** Homosexuality is just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and most people "grow out of". Thus, lesbians/gays are less mature than "straights" and should be treated with the protectiveness and indulgence one uses with a child. Lesbians/gays should not be given positions of authority because they are still working through their adolescent behavior.
- 4. Acceptance:** Still implies there is something to accept. Characterized by such statements as "You're not a lesbian to me, you're a person!" or "What you do in bed is your own business," or "That's fine as long as you don't flaunt it!"

Positive Levels of Attitude

- 1. Support:** The basic ACLU position. Work to safeguard the rights of lesbians and gays. People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the homophobic climate and the irrational unfairness.
- 2. Admiration:** Acknowledges that being lesbian/gay in our society takes strength. People at this level are willing to truly examine their homophobia.
- 3. Appreciation:** Value the diversity of people and see lesbian/gays as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia in themselves and others.
- 4. Nurturance:** Assumes that gay/lesbian people are indispensable in our society. They view lesbians/gays with genuine affection and delight, and are willing to be allies and advocates.

*Source: <http://www.wiu.edu/UCOSO/riddle.htm>

Myths and Realities of Bisexuality

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 always fit our sexuality into strict 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 bisexual. 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:

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 she or he defines herself or 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 a bisexual identity amidst pain and confusion and claim it with pride.

Myth:

Bisexual people 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.

Myths and Realities of Bisexuality (con't)

Myth:

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 sex).

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 lesbians 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 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 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, or 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 be 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.

Myths and Realities of Bisexuality (con't)

Myth:

Bisexuals spread AIDS to the gay 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:

There are some bisexuals who pass as heterosexual 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 sex 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 LGB 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 bisexual women 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 relationship 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.

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 often 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 sensuality any more than lesbians, gays, or heterosexuals. If a bisexual person has a hard time meeting people, her or his bisexuality won't help much.

Myths and Realities of Bisexuality (con't)

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 and heterosexism. 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 often used by our homophobic, biphobic, heterosexist society to separate and alienate us from each other. We are all unique and don't always fit into distinct categories. We sometimes need to use these labels for political reasons and to increase our visibility. Our sexual esteem is facilitated by acknowledging and accepting the differences and seeing the beauty in our diversity.

***Adapted from Vernon A. Wall and Nancy J. Evans "Using Psychological development theories to understand and work with gay and lesbian persons" in Nancy J. Evans and Vernon A. Wall (eds.) Beyond Tolerance: Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals on Campus, American College Personal Association, 1991.**

Poynter's Heterosexual Ally Development Model

Status 1: Pre-Contact (Non-identification)

Heterosexual person in Status 1 and 2 begin to abandon heterosexism and homophobia. Some awareness of different sexual orientations exists as movie, books, magazines, and newspapers (media) cover GLBT issues. This person will not have a close contact with a GLBT person(s). Will believe that heterosexuals and heterosexual relationships are superior to GLBT people and their relationships. Will have a strong negative attitude toward GLBT people. Will not identify as an ally.

Status 2: Contact and Retreat

Heterosexual person has a personal contact with a GLBT person that is a family member, friend, or co-worker. Heterosexuals are still normal and superior to GLBT people. This personal contact leads to a discovery that GLBT people are human beings. Some heterosexuals may experience a hyper vigilance or be focused on associations with GLBT people which leads to a close relationship with the GLBT community. Personal contact is a transition to status 3 that will lead to an increase in knowledge, awareness and reduction in negative attitudes.

Retreat: Heterosexual person will be essentially closed to GLBT issues and understanding due to a variety of issues such as religious beliefs, cultural beliefs, conformity to masculine ideals (if male) and gender roles, and will possess a dualistic reasoning based on these previous issues. This person will retreat to a Status 1.

*Some heterosexual people may begin to identify as an ally (Status 3 and 4) without a personal contact due to less restrictive religious beliefs, liberal views, and moral development such as a desire to help others or to please an authority figure. Status 2 will be temporarily skipped. This person will eventually experience a Status 2 contact, but until then will have varied development as an ally.

Status 3: Internal Identification

Heterosexuals in Status 3 and 4 begin to develop a positive identity as an ally to the GLBT community. Ally in Status 3 does not publicly identify as an ally yet, but further initial contact with the GLBT community will occur. Communication with other heterosexual people that publicly (Status 4) identify as allies will occur. The new ally will begin to realize the importance of being supportive of GLBT people and begins to practice these supportive and advocacy skills in a limited fashion. Will possess less negative attitudes toward GLBT people and a higher level of awareness and knowledge.

Poynter's Heterosexual Ally Development Model (con't)

Status 4: External Identification

The heterosexual will have pride in being an ally to GLBT people. Realization of how much fuller their lives are since they know "out" GLBT people and include them within their lives. Respect and appreciation for the similarities and differences among people with different sexual orientations. Ally will have low negative attitudes and a high level of awareness and knowledge. Ally will have some supportive and advocacy skills and will know other heterosexual allies among their friends, family, and colleagues. Feelings of alienation from other heterosexual people that are not allies will occur as a result of public identification as an ally. Various coping strategies will be used when dealing with negative responses and attitudes toward the ally.

***Developed by Kerry Poynter (1997)**

Things You Should Know as an Ally

The Four Basic Levels of Becoming an Ally

- 1. Awareness:** Explore how you are different from and similar to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Gain this awareness through talking with LGBT people, attending workshops, and performing self-reflections.
- 2. Knowledge/Education:** Begin to understand policies, laws and practices and how they affect LGBT people. Educate yourself on the many communities and cultures of LGBT people.
- 3. Skills:** Learn to take your awareness and knowledge and communicate it to others. You can acquire these skills by attending workshops, role-playing with friends or peers, and developing support connections.
- 4. Action:** Put your acquired skills into action. Despite any fears you may have, action is the only way to effect change in the society as a whole.

Other Points to Keep in Mind

1. Have a good understanding of sexual orientation and be comfortable with your own.
2. Be aware of the coming-out process and realize that it is not a one-time event. The coming-out process is unique to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and brings challenges that are not often understood by all.
3. Understand that LGBT people receive the same messages about homosexuality, bisexuality, etc. as everyone else. Thus, LGBT people sometimes suffer from internalized homophobia and heterosexism. It is important to recognize the risks of coming out and to challenge the internal oppression.
4. Remember that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are a diverse population. Each group within the larger LGBT community has unique needs and experiences.
5. Know at least basic information about AIDS/HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in order to address myths and misinformation and to be supportive of those affected by these ailments whether in themselves, in partners, or friends.

How to be an Ally to Transgender People

1. Validate people's gender expression. It is important to refer to transgender people by the pronoun appropriate to their gender identity. In other words, if someone identifies as female, then refer to the person as "she"; if someone identifies as male, refer to the person as "he." If you are not sure, ask them. Never use the word "it" when referring to someone who is transgender. To do so is incredibly insulting and disrespectful. Some transgender people prefer to use gender-neutral pronouns: "hir" instead of "her" and "his," and "sie" or "ze" instead of "she" and "he."
2. Use non-gendered language to avoid making gender assumptions. Refer to people by name, instead of calling them "sir"/"ma'am" or "Mr."/"Ms."
3. Challenge your own conceptions about gender-appropriate roles and behaviors. Do not expect people to conform to society's beliefs about "women" and "men."
4. Do not assume that someone who is transgender is lesbian, gay, or bisexual, or that a person will seek to transition to become heterosexual.
5. Use the word "crossdresser" instead of "transvestite," as the latter term is often considered pejorative because of the word's clinical and pathological history.
6. Never ask transgender people about how they have sex or what their genitals look like. This is inappropriate in every situation.
7. Do not share the gender identity of individuals without their permission. Do not assume that everyone knows. The decision to tell others about one's gender should be left to the individual.
8. When you learn about someone's transgender identity, do not assume that it is a fad or trend. While public discussions about transgenderism and transsexuality are a relatively recent phenomenon, most transgender people have felt themselves to be gender different from early childhood and have often struggled to be accepted by others. It is important to trust that someone's decision to present themselves as differently gendered is not made lightly or without due consideration.
9. Educate yourself and others about the experiences of transgender people. Introduce trainings, readings, and other resources to your colleagues to continue educational efforts to deconstruct social norms around gender, sex, and sexual orientation.

How to be an Ally to Transgender People (con't)

10. Work to change campus policies in areas such as housing, employment, student records and forms, and health care that discriminate against transgender people and seek to include “gender identity/expression” in your school’s non-discrimination policy.

***Developed by Brett-Genny Janiczek Beemyn, Director of The Stonewall Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Some material adapted from the Southern Arizona Gender Alliance.**

Qualities of a LGBT Ally

A LGBT ally:

1. Has worked to develop an understanding of homosexuality and the needs of the LGBT community.
2. Chooses to align with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and responds to their needs.
3. Believes that it is in her/his self-interest to be an ally.
4. Is committed to the personal growth required (in spite of the probability of discomfort and possible pain).
5. Takes pride in personal success in responding to homophobia and overcoming fears.
6. Expects support from other allies.
7. Is able to acknowledge and articulate how patterns of fear and/or lack of knowledge have operated in his/her life.
8. Expects to make some mistakes but does not use it as an excuse for non-action.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Knows that he/she is responsible for humanizing or empowering their role in society, particularly as their role relates to responding to homophobia.
12. Promotes a sense of community with lesbians, gays, bisexual, or transgender people and teaches others about the importance of outreach.
13. Has a good sense of humor.

Dos and Don'ts of LGBT Ally Assumptions

Don't: Assume that everyone is either homosexual or heterosexual.

Do: Assume that people may be attracted to and/or sexually or romantically involved with a partner of the same or opposite sex. Attraction and/or involvement fall along a continuum for everyone, which can vary over time.

Don't: Assume that a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person's sexuality is the most important aspect of that person.

Do: Assume that everyone is a multi-faceted individual for whom sexuality is one aspect of his/her life among many.

Don't: Assume that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is the cause of a problem in the person's life.

Do: Assume that LGBT people have the same problems as everyone else. They are just as likely to be well adjusted, and just as likely to have difficulty coping with stresses in their lives. Because of discrimination, though, they have to deal with particular stresses that others may not experience.

Don't: Assume that being gay is so hard and problematic that you should feel sorry for LGBT people and/or assume that they would all rather be heterosexual.

Do: Assume that a same-sex erotic and romantic orientation is as legitimate as an opposite-sex orientation.

Don't: Assume that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender "doesn't matter" because you, as an ally, are accepting and treat everyone the same.

Do: Assume the experience of being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in a homophobic and heterosexist society has had some effect on how that person views him/herself and how she/he experiences the world.

Don't: Assume all parents are opposite genders and/or heterosexual.

Do: Assume that a parent or parents may be any combination of genders or sexual orientations.

Don't: Assume that all people in opposite gender marriages are heterosexual.

Do: Assume that a person who is married may have, or have had, LGBT feelings or experiences. Or they might have been involved in a LGBT relationship.

Don't: Assume when interacting with a "single" (unmarried) adult, that that person's only "family members" are parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.

Do: Assume that a "single" (unmarried) person might be involved in a life-long committed relationship with a same-sex partner who is as much "family" as a husband or wife.

Dos and Don'ts of LGBT Ally Assumptions (con't)

Don't: Assume that everyone will find male-female sexual imagery erotic, or that everyone will find banter about male-female sexual encounters entertaining.

Do: Assume that in any group of people, it is highly likely that there is at least one person who may be more interested in same-sex imagery and intrigue.

Don't: Assume that the term "women" refers only to heterosexual women, and that the term "men" refers only to heterosexual men.

Do: Include lesbians and transgender females in your use of the generic "women" and gay men and transgender males in your use of the generic "men."

Examples: In a discussion of women's sexuality, include relating with same-sex and opposite-sex partners. Or in a list of organizations for fathers, include groups for gay fathers.

Don't: Assume all sexually active women use birth control.

Do: Assume that a sexually active woman might have either a male or female sexual partner. With a male partner, she would need birth control.

Cass's Model of Sexual Orientation Identity Formation

Based on work with gay men and lesbians in Australia by Vivienne Cass in 1979. This theory involves the process of movement through stages. Not all individuals will progress through all stages. Individuals can either progress to the next stage or end in the current stage

STAGE 1: Identity Confusion

"Could I be gay?" Person is beginning to wonder if "homosexuality" is personally relevant. Denial and confusion is experienced.

Task: Try to answer the question "Who am I?" - Accept, Deny, Reject.

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

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

STAGE 2: Identity Comparison

"Maybe this does apply to me." Will accept the possibility that she or he may be gay. Self-alienation becomes isolation.

Task: Deal with social alienation.

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

Possible Needs: Will be very important that the person develops own definitions. Will need information about sexual identity, lesbian, gay community resources, encouragement to talk about loss of heterosexual life expectations. May be permitted to keep some "heterosexual" identity (it is not an all or none issue).

Cass's Model of Sexual Orientation Identity Formation (con't)

STAGE 3: Identity Tolerance

"I'm not the only one." Accepts the probability of being homosexual and recognizes sexual, social, emotional needs that go with being lesbian and gay. Increased commitment to being lesbian or gay.

Task: Decrease social alienation by seeking out lesbians and gays.

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

Possible Needs: Be supported in exploring own shame feelings derived from heterosexism, as well as external heterosexism. Receive support in finding positive lesbian, gay community connections. It is particularly important for the person to know community resources.

STAGE 4: Identity Acceptance

"I will be okay." Accepts, rather than tolerates, gay or lesbian self-image. There is continuing and increased contact with the gay and lesbian culture.

Task: Deal with inner tension of no longer subscribing to society's norm, attempt to bring congruence between private and public view of self.

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

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

Cass's Model of Sexual Orientation Identity Formation (con't)

STAGE 5: Identity Pride

"I've got to let people know who I am!" Immerses self in gay and lesbian culture. Less and less involvement with heterosexual community. Us-them quality to political/social viewpoint.

Task: Deal with incongruent views of heterosexuals.

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

Possible Needs: Receive support for exploring anger issues. Find support for exploring issues of heterosexism. Develop skills for coping with reactions and responses to disclosure of sexual identity. Resist being defensive!

STAGE 6: Identity Synthesis

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

Task: Integrate gay and lesbian identity so that instead of being the identity, it is an aspect of self.

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

***Adapted from: Cass, V. Homosexual Identity Development, 1979.
Adopted by Susan Young, SIUC, 1995**

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

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**

Questions Students May Consider Before Coming Out to Parents

1. Are you sure about your sexual orientation?

Don't raise the issue unless you're able to respond with confidence to the question "Are you sure?" Confusion on your part may cause your parents or confidants confusion and decrease their confidence in your conclusions.

2. Are you comfortable with your sexuality?

If you're wrestling with guilt and periods of depression, you might be better off waiting to tell your parents and loved ones. Coming out to them may require tremendous energy on your part. It will require a reserve of positive self-image.

3. Do you have support?

In the event that your parents' or loved ones' reaction devastates you, there should be some one or a group that you can confidently turn to for emotional support and strength. Maintaining your sense of self-worth is critical.

4. Are you knowledgeable about homosexuality?

Your parents or loved ones may respond based on a lifetime of misinformation from a homophobic society. If you've done some serious reading on the subject, you'll be able to assist them by sharing reliable information and research.

5. What's the emotional climate at home?

If you have the choice of when to tell your parents and loved ones, consider the timing. Choose a time when they're not dealing with other critical matters such as financial difficulty, pending surgery, the loss of a job, etc.

6. Can you be patient?

Your parents and loved ones may require time to deal with this information if they haven't considered it prior to your sharing. The process may last for an extended period.

7. What's your motive for coming out now?

Hopefully, it is because you care about your loved ones and are uncomfortable with the distance and secrecy you may feel. Never come out in anger or during an argument, using your sexuality as a weapon.

8. Do you have available resources?

Homosexuality is a subject most people know little about. Have available at least one of the following: a book addressed to parents and loved ones, a contact for the local or national Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gays, the name of a non-gay counselor who can deal fairly with the issue.

Questions Students May Consider Before Coming Out to Parents (con't)

9. Are you financially dependent on your parents?

In the event that they respond negatively to your coming out and might withdraw college finances or force you out of the house, you may choose to wait until they do not have this power to hold over you.

10. What is your general relationship with your parents and loved ones?

If you've gotten along well and have always known their love and shared your love for them in return, then chances are they'll be able to deal with the issue in a positive way.

11. What is their moral societal view?

If your parents or loved ones tend to see social issues in clear terms of good/ bad or holy/sinful, they may have serious problems dealing with your sexuality. If, however, they're evidenced a degree of flexibility when dealing with other changing societal matters, you may be able to anticipate a willingness to work through this with you.

12. Is this your decision?

Not everyone should come out to their parents or loved ones. Don't be pressured into it if you're not sure you'll be better off by doing so - no matter what their response.

***Questions derived from Texas A & M University's Gay and Lesbian Student Speaker's Bureau Manual**

When Someone Comes Out to You and Overcoming Initial Homophobia

When someone shares with you that he or she is gay or has feelings for someone of the same sex, try to be aware of and/or remember that:

1. Coming out is a serious decision. The person is apt to have spent many hours in thoughtful preparation and shares the information with keen awareness of the possible risk.

2. There is no way for the person to predict your reaction. Do not assume that the person should have trusted you with the information sooner. You have spent your entire life in a society that teaches you to despise gay people. The person has no way of knowing in advance how well you will be able to throw off those years of training and respond to such an intimate offering of self.

3. It is important to understand that the person has not changed. You may be shocked by their revelation, but remember this is still the same person as before. Don't let the shock lead you to view the person as suddenly different or bad. You now know that this person can love someone of the same sex. You have no reason to believe suddenly that this person is morally depraved or emotionally unbalanced.

4. Don't ask questions that would have been considered rude within the relationship before this disclosure. This person has the same sensibilities as before. However, you may well need to do some "catching up." Some common questions are:

1. How long have you known you were gay?
2. Is there someone special?
3. Has it been hard for you carrying this secret?
4. Is there some way I can help?
5. Have I ever offended you unknowingly?

Be honest and open about your feelings. It makes the sharing more complete and makes change possible. If you find it hard to believe, say so. If you find you are reacting with emotional distaste but want to learn more so you can overcome your prejudice, say so. If your feelings are totally negative, you can say that too. It is a possibility that the gay person has certainly considered and risked. But in fairness, admit aloud that negative feelings may change so the gay person will leave the door open for you to return if you are able to get past your ingrained prejudice.

When Someone Comes Out to You and Overcoming Initial Homophobia (con't)

You may well be tempted to break the bond you have with this gay person. Though he or she has not changed, the information now confronts you and your homophobic cultural teachings. A conflict may be inevitable. Just as some people develop specific phobias (heights, snakes, deep water, etc.), many people take in the anti-gay messages of the culture and develop homophobia. It is a disability like any other phobia. You can get help with it through psychotherapy, provided the therapist does not share your phobia.

But just as the person who is phobic about deep water may be unaware of anything more than a discomfort with and avoidance of oceans, lakes and rivers, the homophobe may be aware of discomfort in the presence of gay people and the desire to avoid them. If you are prone to homophobia, you will be strongly tempted to rid yourself of this previously valued friendship by quick rupture or (if that includes too much guilt in you) by a slow undermining of the relationship.

If you see the symptoms of homophobia and want help, try to find a gay-oriented psychotherapist. Don't risk unknowingly working with a counselor who shares your homophobia. If you destroy the relationship, chances are the gay person will be hurt, but will survive, having been preparing through life for such a reaction on your part.

If your homophobia is of the very mild variety (like the person who can take the elevator up twenty stories but does not want to visit the tallest building in the city), you can get help from reading and from making social contacts with more gay people. Prejudice thrives on the lack of contradictory information. Integration destroys stereotypes. The more gay people you meet, the better the chances of ridding yourself of mild homophobia.

If you know or suspect that someone you know is gay and you have not yet been told, appreciate the fear and anxiety that inhabits the disclosure. All you can do, usually, is to make it openly known that you appreciate and support gay people. Actions speak louder than words, however. Gay friends and gay-oriented reading materials in your home do more than announcements of pro-gay feelings, which may not sound sincere.

When to Refer a Someone to a Mental Health Professional

Most of the LGBT students and colleagues you encounter will be seeking support, advice, or information. Occasionally, you may encounter a person who is experiencing extreme psychological distress. The following are signs that you need to suggest that that person seek professional assistance.

IWU Counseling and Consultation Services would be an appropriate first referral for students. They offer counseling services for students free of charge. IWU employees can contact the Employee Assistance Program to be connected with a counselor 24 hours a day, free of charge.

1. A person expresses suicidal thoughts or feelings.
2. A person can no longer cope with their day to day activities and responsibilities. She/He may no longer be going to classes/work.
3. A person has symptoms of depression such as: sleep disturbance, sudden weight loss or weight gain, crying spells, fatigue, loss of interest or pleasure in previous enjoyable activities, and/or inability to concentrate or complete tasks.
4. A person has severe anxiety symptoms such as: panic, shortness of breath, headaches, sweaty palms, dry mouth, or racing thoughts.
5. A student states they are no longer able to function in their normal capacity within their classes and/or have seen a drop in grades or academic performance.
6. A person has no support. They have no friends they can talk to about their sexual orientation. This person may not necessarily need counseling, but may benefit from a support group. Counseling and Consultation Services can make that assessment and referral.
7. If you, the IWU Safe Zone member, are feeling overwhelmed or worried about someone, referring them to a mental health professional would probably be appropriate.

Counseling and Consultation Services (Magill Lower Level)
(309) 556-3052

Employee Assistance Program
(800) 252-4555

Secondary Victimization and Reporting Harassment

A LGBT crime survivor may experience increased discrimination or stigma from others who have learned about his or her sexual orientation as a consequence of the victimization. Such secondary victimization, which can further intensify the negative psychological consequences of victimization, is often expressed explicitly by representatives of the criminal justice system, including police officers and judges. It also extends outside the criminal justice system. If their sexual orientation becomes publicly known as a result of a crime, for example, some lesbians and gay men risk loss of employment or child custody.

Even in jurisdictions where statutory protection is available, many gay people fear that disclosure of their sexual orientation as a result of victimization will result in hostility, harassment, and rejection from others. Secondary victimization may be experienced as an additional assault on one's identity and community, and thus an added source of stress. The threat of secondary victimization often acts as a barrier to reporting a crime or seeking medical, psychological, or social services. (by Gregory M. Herek)

When someone informs you they have been harassed:

Step 1: Ask if they are safe. Assess the situation regarding safety.

Step 2: If the person is not safe, immediately call Campus Security. Campus Security will respond and assess if the police, a counselor, and/or the Student Affairs professional-on-duty should be contacted for further assistance.

Step 3: Inform the person that you will protect their confidentiality to the best of your ability and will not tell anyone their name without their permission in order to avoid secondary victimization.

Step 4: Make sure all identifying information is not revealed while communicating with others, even IWU Safe Zone members, about the incident.

Step 5: Suggest that the person file a bias incident report through the Office of Judicial Affairs (students) or Human Resources (employees). Students can also seek assistance from the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office. You can also suggest that the person seek help with Counseling and Consultation Services (student) or another counselor (employee) in order to process what happened. (See contact information on the following page.)

Secondary Victimization and Reporting Harassment (con't)

Helpful suggestions:

1. Do not handle the situation alone if at all possible. Try to refer the student to the Dean of Students Office, Counseling and Consultation Services, or Campus Security.

2. When communicating with the police, do not expect or assume that they will be sensitive to the issues of LGBT people. In fact, it is likely the police have had little sensitivity training or exposure to LBG students regarding reporting of harassment. Make sure that the person(s) assigned to your particular case understands that the identity of the student can not under any circumstances be revealed, without their permission, to the general public or media. Police reports need to be purged of all identifying information (name, address, phone, etc.) before it is released to the media and general public.

**Campus Security
(309) 556-1111**

**Dean of Students Office
(309) 556-3111**

**Office of Judicial Affairs
(309) 556-3541**

**Counseling and Consultation Services
(309) 556-3052**

**IWU Human Resources
(309) 556-3536**

**Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
(309) 556-3412**

Abbreviated Timeline of LGBT History in America

1903 - On Feb. 21, New York police conduct the first recorded raid on a gay bathhouse.

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

1928 - *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall is published in the United States. This sparks great legal controversy and brings the topic of homosexuality to public conversation.

1948- Alfred Kinsey publishes *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, a groundbreaking study which broaches topics of homosexuality and bisexuality previously undiscussed.

1951 - The Mattachine Society is formed by Harry Hay, and becomes the country's first national gay rights organization.

1956 - National lesbian group The Daughters of Bilitis is formed.

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

1965 - The first gay rights protests occur in Washington, DC and in front of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

1969 - The Stonewall Riots begin on June 27 for three days, launching the previously quiet gay rights movement into a massive period of social change, with members increasing from hundreds into the thousands in less than a year.

1970 - The first Gay Liberation Day March is held in New York City. The first Gay Freedom Day March is held in Los Angeles. The first Gay-in held in San Francisco.

1971 - The University of Michigan establishes the first collegiate LGBT programs office, then known as the "Gay Advocate's Office."

1971-73 - The Gay Raiders, a gay militant group, campaign against television networks to feature and discuss gay people on the air. They disrupt various programs including the CBS Evening News.

Abbreviated Timeline of LGBT History in America (con't)

1973 - The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders.

1975 - Governor Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania creates the first committee to research and report on discrimination against sexual minorities. One year later, Governor Shapp issues an executive order outlawing discrimination against sexual minorities in employment, housing and public accommodation.

1981 - The first cases of AIDS are found in homosexual men in New York and Los Angeles.

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

1982 - The first Gay Games takes place in San Francisco, drawing over 1,350 athletes.

1985 - A spokesperson for actor Rock Hudson acknowledges the star has AIDS, bringing the disease to the media forefront for the first time.

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. Thousands of gay and lesbian persons are relieved of their positions.

1996 - The Supreme Court strikes down Colorado’s Amendment 2, which denied gays and lesbians protections against discrimination,

1997 - Ellen Degeneres’ character Ellen Morgan comes out as a lesbian on the popular sit-com Ellen, drawing 36 million viewers.

1998 – University of Wyoming student, Matthew Shepard, is murdered because of his homosexuality.

2000 - Vermont becomes the first state in the country to legally recognize civil unions between gay or lesbian couples.

2003 - The Supreme Court rules in Lawrence v. Texas that laws prohibiting sodomy are unconstitutional.

Abbreviated Timeline of LGBT History in America (con't)

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

2005 - Civil unions become legal in Connecticut in Oct. 2005.

2007 - Gay domestic partnerships are legalized in Washington state on July 22. Oregon, Colorado, Ohio, and Iowa ban discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the private sector. On August 9, Logo hosts the first presidential forum in the United States focusing specifically on LGBT issues. Six Democratic Party candidates participate in the event, including Democratic nominee Barack Obama.

2008 - The civil union law goes into effect in New Hampshire on Jan. 1. Domestic partnership legislation in Oregon becomes effective Feb. 4. On May 15, the California State Supreme Court rules it unconstitutional to deny same-sex couples equal marriage rights, making California the second state to legalize same-sex marriage.

2009 – President Obama signs Matthew Shepard Act, which expands federal hate-crime law. Some states legalize same-sex marriage. More states begin to adopt ‘everything but marriage’ domestic partnership laws. The California Supreme Court upholds Proposition 8 and bans same sex marriages.

2010 – On August 4, Proposition 8 in California (which banned same sex marriage) was overturned. “Don’t ask, don’t tell” law ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge.

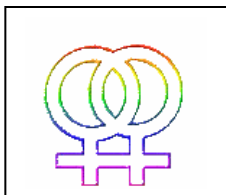
2011 – Illinois became the sixth state to legalize same-sex civil unions. New York passes a law to allow same-sex marriages.*

*For up to date news on same-sex couple recognition in the United States, visit: http://www.thetaskforce.org/issues/marriage_and_partnership_recognition

*Sources: <http://www.365gay.com/uncategorized/an-american-gay-history-timeline-1903-2008/>
http://www.ct.gov/dcf/lib/dcf/wmv/pdf/timeline_of_lgbt_history.pdf

Symbols of Pride

Listed below are just a few symbols that have been adopted by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and their allies along with the significance of each.



Double Woman's Symbol

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



Double Man's Symbol

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



The Rainbow Flag

The Rainbow Flag has been adopted by the LGBT 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," which had five stripes-one each for the colors of humankind's skin-flown at the 1960's college demonstrations. Major gay and lesbian parades in New York, Houston, Vancouver and Toronto began to fly the six-stripe Rainbow Flag. It is prominently displayed at most gay and lesbian events. In New York, the flag drapes coffins of people who have died of AIDS, and is frequently displayed on hospital doors. In a few short years, the flag has spread world wide to represent a movement. Its success is not due to any official recognition but to the widespread spontaneous adoption by members of the community it represents.



Transgender Symbol

Transgender symbols frequently consist of modified gender symbols combining elements from both the male and female symbols.

Symbols of Pride (con't)



The Labrys

The double-bladed ax comes from the myth as the scepter of the goddess Demeter (Artemis). It may have originally been used in battle by female Sythian warriors. The Labrys appears in ancient Cretan art and has become a symbol of lesbianism.



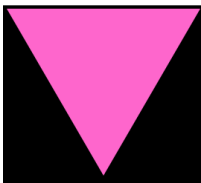
The Lambda

Chosen by the Gay Activist Alliance in 1970 as the symbol of the gay movement, the lambda is the Greek letter "L." A battle flag with the lambda was carried by a regiment of ancient Greek warriors who were accompanied in battle by their young male lovers and noted for their fierceness and willingness to fight to the death.



Freedom Rings

Designed by David Spada with the Rainbow Flag in mind, these six colored aluminum rings have come to symbolize independence and tolerance of others. They were quickly adopted by the gay community and the rings are frequently displayed or worn as jewelry and can be found as necklaces, bracelets, rings and key chains.



Pink Triangle

One of the oldest symbols used to denote homosexuality. They originated Nazi concentration camp badges that homosexuals were required to wear. Around 220,000 gay men and lesbians perished in Nazi death camps during World War II. Thus, Pink Triangle is used both as an identification symbol and as a memento to remind people of the atrocities that gays suffered. AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power adopted the inverted pink triangle to symbolize the "active fight back" against HIV/AIDS "rather than a passive resignation to fate."

NOTES
