

2011

# LGBT 101 and Safe Spaces Program 2011

Joseph A. Santiago

University of Rhode Island, [balanceheart@hotmail.com](mailto:balanceheart@hotmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/glbtc>

 Part of the [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Santiago, Joseph A., "LGBT 101 and Safe Spaces Program 2011" (2011). *Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Center*. Paper 117.  
<http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/glbtc/117>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Community, Equity, & Diversity Collections at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Center by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu).

**LGBT 101 and Safe Spaces Program**

## Introduction

---

### **Purpose**

LGBT 101 information is part of a program to create a safer and more receptive campus and work place environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and/or questioning people through education and ally development. It is modeled after similar programs at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

This short introduction to LGBT 101 and introduction to SafeSpace training will begin to facilitate conversations, increase individuals general knowledge of LGBT issues, and become aware of some LGBT symbols that communicate identities around us every day.

---

### **Objectives**

Participants in LGBT 101 and SafeSpace training will:

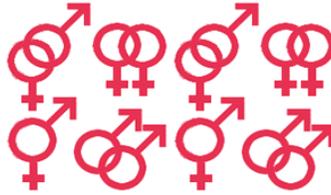
- a. Increase their awareness and knowledge of LGBTQ issues district wide and in the community.
  - b. Engage in discussion of LGBTQ issues and concerns.
  - c. Learn how to create a physically safe, secure, welcoming and emotionally safe atmosphere for LGBTQ employees and students.
  - d. Learn how to handle homophobic violence and harassment in the classroom and the workplace.
  - e. Understand their role in the implementation of the district wide SafeSpace program.
- 



## Introduction, continued

---

Permission  
to be  
Imperfect



**GLBT Center  
University of Rhode Island**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby have permission to be imperfect with regards to my understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity. It is OK that I do not know all the answers or if, at times, my lack of knowledge and misunderstandings become obvious.

I understand that I am a product of my culture and that I might struggle with these issues. I have permission to ask questions that appear uninformed. I have permission to be upfront and honest about my feelings.

I don't have to feel guilty about what I know or believe, but I do need to take responsibility for what I can do from now on:

- learning as much as I can
- changing my false or inaccurate beliefs or oppressive attitudes

---

Signed

Date



# Introduction,

---

What do you feel?

## WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LGBTQ LIFE?

Clarifying our attitudes and beliefs helps us to become more conscious of what we feel. The purpose in responding to the following items is not to try to change your attitudes and values, but to bring to your consciousness what those attitudes and values are. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. The important thing is that you understand what you personally feel, not what you think you should feel. You might want to ask yourself why you feel the way you do.

Please read each statement below and circle the “SA” if you strongly agree with the statement, “A” if you agree with it, “N” if you are neutral, “D” if you disagree with it or “SD” if you strongly disagree.

**SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree**

- |    |   |   |   |    |    |  |
|----|---|---|---|----|----|--|
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 1. | I feel uncomfortable when I'm with people who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender.  |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 2. | If I found out that a close friend was gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender, I think our relationship would be less close in the future.                       |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 3. | I believe the homosexual life is a valid alternative for those who live it.  |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 4. | I don't mind being around gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual people as long as they don't flaunt their homosexuality.  |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 5. | I believe that homosexual people are always trying to seduce heterosexual people and win converts to their life.   |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 6. | I'm quite uncomfortable around men who are feminine acting and women who are masculine acting.   |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 7. | Gays and lesbians shouldn't be teachers because they will make their students gay or lesbian.  |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 8. | People in same-sex relationships are completely immoral and unnatural.   |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 9. | If a close friend told me that s/he was lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender, it would make us closer because my friend is revealing something very important. |

---

*Continued on next page*

## Introduction, continued

---

- SA A N D SD 10. Homosexual people are probably going to hell.
- SA A N D SD 11. I'm against programs and groups organized specifically to meet the social and cultural needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.
- SA A N D SD 12. I don't really like seeing all the gay, lesbian and bisexual characters on TV and in the media. It makes them seem too acceptable in our society.
- SA A N D SD 13. I am able to accept seeing open expression of affection among gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual people.

Heterosexuality  
Quiz

## A “Simple” Questionnaire for Heterosexuals

1. What do you think *caused* your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you *decide* you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible that your heterosexuality is *just a phase* that you may grow out of?
4. Is it possible that heterosexuality stems from a *neurotic fear* of others of the same sex?
5. Do your parents know you are straight? Do your friends, co-workers and/or your roommates know?
6. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? *Can't you be who you are and be quiet?*
7. Why do heterosexuals put *so much* emphasis on sex?
8. Why do heterosexuals feel *compelled* to introduce others to their lifestyle?
9. A disproportionate majority of child molesters are heterosexual (97%)\*. *Do you consider it wise to expose children to heterosexual teachers?*
10. Just what do men and women *do* in bed together?
11. Bearing in mind the current divorce rate, why are there *so few stable relationships* between heterosexuals?
12. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone was heterosexual?
13. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed that might enable you to change if you really want to. *Have you considered aversion therapy?*
14. Would you want your child to be heterosexual, *knowing the problems they would face?*

\* "Statistics regarding child molestation prepared by the Boston Advocates for Human Rights reveal that, "the vast majority of child molestation - over 90% - is performed by heterosexual males. The man who is sexually interested in children is rarely homosexual." ["Facts," *Trinity College Safe Zones* [www.trincoll.edu/prog/safezone/Facts.htm](http://www.trincoll.edu/prog/safezone/Facts.htm) 30 August 2002, 1 March 2003.]

\* "LGBT people are often identified as outsiders, and sexual deviates, and are scapegoated as sex offenders. However, in the vast majority of sexual assaults, offenders are heterosexual men (Anti-Violence Project, male sexual assault statistics, 1992.) Another common myth about LGBT people is that they are child molesters. This is also untrue; in fact a groundbreaking study of sexual-abuse offenders concluded that a heterosexual adult is more likely to be a threat to children than a homosexual adult is (Groth, *Men Who Rape*, Plenum Press, NY, 1979)." ["Fact Sheets: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered (LGBT) Populations and Sexual Assault," *WCSA* [www.wcasa.org/pages/lesbigay.html](http://www.wcasa.org/pages/lesbigay.html) 1 March 2003]

# The Facts

---

## Terms

TERMS	FAMILIAR	UNFAMILIAR
Lesbian		
Gay		
Bi-sexual		
Transgender		
Questioning		
Queer		
Ally		
Androgyny		
Biphobia		
Coming Out		
Cross-dresser		
Drag King		
Drag Queen		
Gender		
Gender-bending		
Gender Expression		
Gender Identity		
Gender Roles		
Hate Crime		
Heterosexism		
Heterosexual		
Heterosexual Privilege		
Homophobia		
Homosexual		
Intersex		
In the closet		
Institutional Discrimination		
Metrosexual		
Opposite- and Same-Sex Sexual Harassment		
Outing		
Sex		
Sexism		
Sexual Orientation		
Socialization		
Stereotype		
Transsexual		

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

**Lesbian:** Preferred term for women who are attracted to women.

**Gay:** Preferred term for men who are attracted to men. Gay is also used as a blanket term for homosexuals and bi-sexuals, male and female.

**Bi-sexual:** A person who is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to persons of both sexes, sometimes referred to as bi-affectionate to take away the emphasis on sex.

**Transgender Person:** A person whose self-identification challenges traditional notions of gender and sexuality. Transgender people include transsexuals and others who do not conform to traditional understandings of labels like male and female or heterosexual and homosexual.

**Questioning:** Refers to individuals who are unsure about their sexual orientation and as a result "question their identity."

**Queer:** A person who feels his/her gender identity and/or sexual orientation is outside the binary. Queer is a word that has been used negatively but has been reclaimed by some LGBT individuals to describe their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

**Ally:** Any non-lesbian, non-gay, non-bi-sexual or non-transgender person whose attitude and behavior are anti-heterosexist and whose perspective and actions work toward combating homophobia and heterosexism, both on a personal and an institutional level.

**Androgyny:** Blending of what are usually regarded as male and female characteristics, values, or attitudes.

**Biphobia:** Fear, hatred and/or discomfort with bi-sexual persons, bisexuality, or cross-gender role behavior resulting from lack of understanding of bi-sexual culture. Bi-sexual persons may feel this hatred or fear from both heterosexual and homosexual persons.

**Coming Out:** Slang used to describe the act of a person who has decided to publicly proclaim her or his homosexual, bi-sexual or transgender identity.

**Cross-dresser:** A person who enjoys dressing in clothes typically associated with the other gender. Sometimes called a transvestite (not preferred term). Many cross-dressers are heterosexual married men.

**Drag King:** A woman who chooses to cross-dress as a male from time to time. Drag kings can be lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual. ["Gender Definitions," *Gender Identity Consultancy Services* <http://jmembers.aol.com/gics/index.html> 1 March 2003.]

**Drag Queen:** A man who dresses in clothes, typically flamboyant and glamorous styles, associated with female movie stars or singers, all with theatrical intent and sometimes with the intention of poking fun at gender roles.

**Gender:** The assignment of characteristics labeled masculine and feminine expected to correlate to men and women, respectively, in a society's binary system.

**Gender-bending:** Refers to individuals who challenge gender notions through their gender expression and appearance, usually done quite deliberately and sometimes as farce or play.

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

**Gender Expression:** The expression of one's sense of oneself as male, female, neither or both.

**Gender Identity:** One's psychological sense of oneself as male, female, neither or both.

**Gender Roles:** The socially constructed and culturally specific collection of attitudes and behaviors considered normal and appropriate for people of a particular sex; established sex-related behavioral expectations people are expected to fill.

**Hate Crime:** A "criminal offense committed against person, property, or society which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin." ["Section II: Hate Crime," *Federal Bureau of Investigation* [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov) 2 March 2003]

**Heterosexism:** Cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices based on heterosexuality as the only normal, acceptable, and natural sexual orientation.

**Heterosexual:** Clinical term describing a person whose sexual orientation is directed towards members of the opposite sex.

**Heterosexual Privilege:** The benefits and advantages heterosexuals receive in a heterosexist culture. Also, the benefits lesbians, gay men, and bi-sexual people receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual or bi-sexual identity.

**Homophobia:** The fear, hatred, or intolerance of lesbians, gay men, or any behavior that is outside the boundaries of traditional gender roles. Homophobia can be manifested as fear of association with lesbian or gay people or being perceived as lesbian or gay. Homophobic behavior can range from telling jokes about lesbian and gay people to physical violence against people thought to be lesbian or gay.

**Homosexual:** Clinical term describing a person whose primary social, emotional, and sexual orientation is directed towards members of the same sex.

**Intersex:** Individuals with a variety of nonstandard reproductive, chromosomal or sexual anatomies, hormonal blocks or adrenal gland malfunctions.

**In the closet:** A term generally defined as hiding one's non-heterosexual identity from others.

**Institutional Discrimination:** Discrimination that has been incorporated into structures, processes, and procedures of organizations due to prejudice or because of failure to take in to account the particular needs of people based upon race, religion, sexuality, gender, ethnicity/national origin, able-bodiedness, class, age, etc. [taken in part from the definition of "Institutionalized Racism" from the following site: The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham: Equalities and Diversity at [www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk](http://www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk), 3 March 2003]

**Metosexual:** Term generally applied to heterosexual men with a strong concern for their appearance, and/or who display many of the lifestyle tendencies of stereotypically gay men.

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

**Monogamy:** Monogamy means different things to different people and it can be understood simply in these ways. **1.** Monogamy is the practice or condition of having a single sexual partner during a period of time. **2.** Monogamy is the practice or condition of being married to only one person at a time. These last two definitions are often referred to as serial monogamy. **3.** Monogamy is the practice of marrying only once in a lifetime.

**Opposite- and Same-Sex Sexual Harassment:** Opposite-sex sexual harassment occurs when offender and the victim are both heterosexual; Same-sex sexual harassment occurs when offender and victim are both homosexual.

**Outing:** The accidental or intentional disclosure of another person's LGBT status without consideration of their readiness to have this information generally known.

**Polyamorous relationship:** Having two or more intimately loving and/or sexual relationships with others honestly and with the knowledge and consent of the others.

**Sex:** The biological characteristics of genitals, internal reproductive organs, gonads (ovaries and testes), hormones, and chromosomes. Male and female are the labels for these clusters of biological traits.

**Sexism:** The societal/cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and denigrate women-identified values.

**Sexual Orientation:** The desire for intimate emotional and sexual relationships with people of the same gender (lesbian, gay), the other gender (heterosexual), or either gender (bi-sexual).

**Socialization:** Process whereby our society conveys to the individual behavioral expectations for his/her gender; occurs through parents, siblings, peer groups, schools/books, teachers, mass media, etc. Socialization presents a conflict in identity development for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender individuals.

**Stereotype:** Generalized notion of what a person is like based only on an individual's sex, gender, race, religion, ethnic background, or similar criterion.

**Transsexual:** A person whose biological sex does not match their gender identity and who, through gender reassignment surgery and hormone treatments, seeks to change their physical body to match their gender identity. Transsexuals' sexual orientation can be heterosexual, homosexual, or bi-sexual.

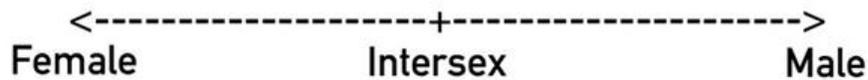
---

*Continued on next page*

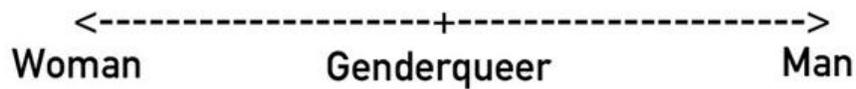
# THE IDENTITY SPECTRUM

This graph is a fun exercise to help one understand that Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation does not have to be black and white as both the Heteronormative/Cisgender Society around us (AKA Straight People) and the LGBT Community ascribe them to be -- find your own identity with this exercise and sincerely explore who YOU are and challenge the stereotypes of Gender and Sexual Orientation. Simply draw a line that best identifies along these spectrums.

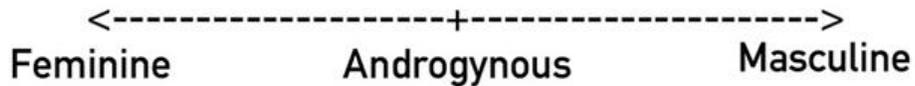
## SEX



## GENDER IDENTITY



## GENDER EXPRESSION



## SEXUAL ORIENTATION



This has been a production of <http://www.translategender.org> and Ahuviya Harel <http://adf-fuensalida.deviantart.com> - Reproduction is permitted for Fair Use and Psycho-Educational purposes. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License.



## The Facts, continued

---

### Symbols of Pride

**The Rainbow Flag:** Use of the rainbow flag by the gay community began in 1978 when it first appeared in the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade. Borrowing symbolism from the hippie movement and black civil rights groups, San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker designed the rainbow flag in response to a need for a symbol that could be used year after year. Baker and thirty volunteers hand-stitched and hand-dyed two huge prototype flags for the parade.

The flags had eight stripes, each color representing a component of the community:

- Hot Pink for Sex
- Red for Life
- Orange for Healing
- Yellow for Sun
- Green for Nature
- Turquoise for Art
- Indigo for Harmony
- Violet for Spirit

The next year Baker approached San Francisco Paramount Flag Company to mass-produce rainbow flags for the 1979 parade. Due to production constraints the hot pink and turquoise were removed and blue replaced the indigo. This six-color version spread from San Francisco to other cities, and soon became the widely known symbol of gay pride and diversity it is today.



The rainbow flag has inspired a wide variety of related symbols such as the freedom rings, the Rainbow Coin, Rainbow Triangles and Color Bars.

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

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



The multicultural symbolism of the rainbow is nothing new -- Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition also embraces the rainbow as a symbol of that political movement. The rainbow also plays a part in many myths and stories related to gender and sexuality issues in Greek, Native American, African, and other cultures.



**The Pink Triangle:** During WWII, gays were only one of the many groups targeted for extermination by the Nazi regime. It is unfortunately the group that history often excludes.

The history of the triangle begins before WWII, during Adolph Hitler's rise to power. Paragraph 175, a clause in German law prohibiting gay relations, was revised by Hitler in 1935 to include kissing, embracing, and gay fantasies as well as sexual acts. Convicted offenders -- an estimated 25,000 just from 1937 to 1939 -- were sent to prison and then later to concentration camps. Their sentence was to be sterilized, and this was most often accomplished by castration. In 1942 Hitler's punishment for homosexuality was extended to death.

The social Hierarchy among prisoners:

1. The green triangle marked its wearer as a regular criminal
2. The red triangle denoted a political prisoner
3. Two yellow triangles overlapping to form a Star of David designated a Jewish prisoner
4. The pink triangle was for gay men
5. The black triangle was for lesbians, prostitutes; women who refused to bear children
6. A yellow Star of David under a superimposed pink triangle marked the lowest of all prisoners -- a gay Jew.

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

The total number of the gay prisoners is not known. Gay prisoners reportedly were not shipped en masse to the death camps at Auschwitz. A great number of gay men were among the non-Jews who were killed there. Estimates of the number of gay men killed during the Nazi regime range from 50,000 to twice that figure. When the war was finally over, countless homosexuals remained prisoners in the camps, because Paragraph 175 remained law in West Germany until its repeal in 1969.

In the 1970's, gay liberation groups resurrected the pink triangle as a popular symbol for the gay rights movement in the 1980's; ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) began using the pink triangle for their cause. They inverted the symbol to signify an active fight back rather than a passive resignation to fate.



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



**Bi-sexual Triangles:** Like the pink & black triangles, the bi-sexual triangles represent bi-sexual people



**Lambda Symbol:** The Lambda Symbol seems to be one of the most controversial of symbols in regards to its meaning, however a few main points are agreed upon by the majority.

The lambda was first chosen as a gay symbol when it was adopted in 1970 by the New York Gay Activists Alliance. It became the symbol of their growing movement of gay liberation. In 1974, the lambda was subsequently adopted by the International Gay Rights Congress held in Edinburgh, Scotland, as their symbol for lesbian and gay rights. The lambda became internationally popular.

The main question after this is simply why? Why was the lambda symbol even chosen as a representation of the gay and lesbian movement? Some say that it is simply the Greek lower-case letter "l" for liberation. Lambda may also denote the synergy of the gay movement, the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The lambda also may represent scales and balance, and the constant force that keeps opposing sides from overcoming each other -- the hook at the bottom of the right leg signifies the action needed to reach and maintain balance. The ancient Greek Spartans regarded the lambda to mean unity, while the Romans considered it "the light of knowledge shed into the darkness of ignorance."

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

Today, the symbol generally denotes lesbian's and gay men's concerns together. In the early 1970's the Los Angeles gay community created a flag with a lavender lambda on a simple white background. They hoped the flag would catch on to other cities, but their hopes were denied because some saw the lambda as a male symbol only.

**Gender Symbols** are common astrological signs handed down from ancient Roman times. The pointed Mars symbol represents the male and the Venus symbol with the cross represents the female. Double interlocking male symbols have been used by gay men since the 1970's. Double interlocking female symbols have often been used to denote lesbianism, but some feminists have instead used the double female symbols to represent the sisterhood of women. These same feminists would use three interlocking female symbols to denote lesbianism. Also, some lesbian feminists of the 1970's used three interlocking female symbols to represent their rejection of male standards of monogamy.



Also in the 1970's, gay liberation movements used the male and female symbols superimposed to represent the common goals of lesbians and gay men. These days, the superimposed symbols might also denote a heterosexual aware of the differences and diversity between men and women. A transgender person might superimpose the male and female symbols in such a way that the arrow and cross join on the same single ring.



**The labrys** is a double-sided hatchet or axe commonly used in ancient European, African, and Asian matriarchical societies as both a weapon and a harvesting tool. Greek artwork depicts the Amazon armies of Europe wielding labrys weapons. Amazons ruled with a dual-queen system in which one queen was in charge of the army and battle, and the other queen stayed behind to administer the conquered cities. Amazons were known to be ferocious and merciless in battle, but once victorious they ruled with justice. Today, the labrys is a lesbian and feminist symbol of strength and self-sufficiency.

In addition, the labrys also played a part in ancient mythology. Demeter, the goddess of the earth, used a labrys as her scepter. Rites associated with the worship of the Demeter, as well as Hecate (the goddess of the underworld), are believed to have involved lesbian sex.

**The astrological sign of Mercury** is traditionally the symbol of transgender peoples. In Greek mythology, Hermes (the Greek version of the Roman god Mercury) and Aphrodite (the goddess of love) had a child named Hermaphroditus. That child possessed both male and female sexual organs, hence the term hermaphrodite. Also, rituals associated with the worship of Aphrodite are believed to have been highly sexual, involving castration, transvestism, and homosexual relations.



In the symbol itself, the crescent moon at the top is supposed to represent the masculine, and the cross at the bottom represents the feminine. The ring represents the individual, with the male and the female balanced at either side.

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

**According to Kinsey statistics, “at least 10% of the populace has demonstrated its homosexual proclivities so extensively that that proportion may be called ‘gay’.” If this statement is correct, homosexuality may be a more commonplace activity in America than, say bowling (6%), jogging (7%), golfing (5%), hunting (6%), or ballroom dancing (2%) on a regular basis.**

*After the Ball, 1989, Doubleday*

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

### What do you know ...

---

#### WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT (or what were you taught about) GLBTQ LIFE?

For many people, much of what they *think* they know about GLBTQ life is based on the myths they've heard about it, not the reality of it. Sorting out myths and realities can lead to greater self-awareness that motivates us to learn more and become more accepting of those whose sexual orientation may be different from our own.

Please read each statement below and circle the "SA" if you strongly agree with the statement, "A" if you agree with it, "N" if you are neutral, "D" if you disagree with it or "SD" if you strongly disagree.

**SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree**

- |    |   |   |   |    |    |   |
|----|---|---|---|----|----|---|
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 1. | Gay, Lesbian, and bi-sexual people can ordinarily be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.      |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 2. | In a gay relationship one partner usually plays the "husband"/"butch" role and the other plays the "wife"/"femme" role. |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 3. | We do not know what causes homosexuality.   |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 4. | Most gay people could be cured by having really good sex with a member of the opposite sex.                             |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 5. | The majority of child molesters are gay.  |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 6. | Most gay people regard themselves as members of the opposite sex.   |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 7. | Homosexuality is not "natural" – that is, it does not exist in nature; therefore, that proves that it is dysfunctional. |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 8. | Gay people should not be teachers because they will try to convert their students to the gay life.                      |
| SA | A | N | D | SD | 9. | Gay people have made a conscious decision to be gay.  |

---

*Continued on next page*

## The Facts, continued

---

- SA A N D SD 10. There are very few “bisexuals;” most people are either completely homosexually or heterosexually oriented.
- SA A N D SD 11. Homosexuality is a type of mental illness and can be cured by appropriate psychotherapy.
- SA A N D SD 12. One homosexual experience as an adolescent will play a large part in determining whether a person will be homosexually-oriented as an adult.
- SA A N D SD 13. Transgender people are homosexuals.

## Heterosexism and Heterosexual Privilege

---

**Heterosexism** A system of cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices based on heterosexuality as the only normal, acceptable, and natural sexual orientation.

---

**What is Heterosexual Privilege?** Living without ever having to think twice, face, confront, engage, or cope with anything on this page. Heterosexuals can address these phenomena, but social/political forces do not require them to do so.

---

### **1. Marrying...which includes the following privileges:**

- Public recognition and support for an intimate relationship
- Joint child custody
- Paid leave from employment when grieving for the death of your spouse
- Property Laws, filing joint tax returns, inheriting from your spouse automatically under probate laws
- Sharing health, auto, and homeowner's insurance policies at reduced rates
- Immediate access to your loved ones in case of accident or emergency
- Family-of-origin support for a life with a spouse
- Not having to "prove" your relationship in order to get survivor benefits
- Being allowed to see a dying partner if his/her family objects to your presence
- Not having a will annulled and joint property seized by disapproving family members after a partner dies.

### **2. Not questioning your normalcy, sexually and culturally:**

- Having role models of your gender and sexual orientation
- Learning about romance and relationships from fiction, movies, and television
- Having positive media images of people with whom you can identify

---

*Continued on next page*

## Heterosexism and Heterosexual Privilege, continued

---

### 3. Validation from the culture in which you live:

- Living with your partner and doing so openly
- Talking about your relationship, or what projects, vacations, and family planning you and your partner are creating
- Expressing pain when a relationship ends from death or separation, and having other people notice and tend to your pain
- Receiving social acceptance by neighbors, colleagues, and good friends
- Not having to hide and lie about women/men-only social activities
- Dating the person of your desire during your teenage years
- Working without being identified by your sexuality/culture (e.g. you are the farmer, bricklayer, artist, etc., and not the heterosexual farmer, the gay bricklayer, the lesbian artist, etc)

### 4. Institutional Acceptance:

- Employment Opportunity: Increased possibilities of getting a job, receiving on the job training and promotion
- Receiving validation from your religious community, being able to be a member of the clergy/religious leadership
- Being employed as a teacher in pre-school through high school without fear of being fired any day because you are assumed to corrupt children
- Adopting children and/or being a foster parent
- Raising children without threats of state intervention, without children having to worry which of their friends might reject them because of their parent's sexuality and culture

---

*Continued on next page*

## Heterosexism and Heterosexual Privilege, continued

---

### Heterosexual Privilege

---

This title and concept is taken directly from a piece titled “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” written by Peggy McIntosh of Wellesley College Center on Research for Women, Wellesley, MA 02181 (617-431-1453). The article appeared in *Peace and Freedom*, July/August 1989.

The intent in writing the following is to simply stimulate thinking, which may travel in any number of directions depending on the individual. For example, what are the similarities and differences between racism and homophobia? A second example is to explore one’s sense of what lesbian, gay, and bi-sexual people face and then consider what you might do about that. Since these two columns barely introduce the topic, I recommend reading Peggy’s article and two other, Phillip Brian Harper’s, “Racism and Homophobia as Reflections of their Perpetrators,” and Ann Pellegrini’s “S(h)ifting the Terms of Hetero/Sexism: Gender, Power, Homophobias,” both appear in Warren Blumfield’s edited book, *Homophobia: How We All Pay The Price*.

To be other than a heterosexual is to be at a disadvantage; thus, as a heterosexual I have privileges and advantages that gays, bisexuals, and lesbians do not have. These are privileges that no one ever bothered to point out to me or teach me about or ask me to consider. I never thought about this until I read the article by Peggy. Here privileges, conditions that she could count on but her Black colleagues could not, guided me in my initial list of heterosexual privileges. My list grows as I think of those opportunities that I have come to take for granted, but are denied to my gay, lesbian and bisexual colleagues. What I have come to realize is that I did not earn or work to have these privileges afforded me. I was automatically given them and was able to use them, because I’m heterosexual.

Once having recognized the “privileges,” or as Peggy would, upon reflection, refer to as positive advantage and negative advantage, what will I do? Some, like kissing in public, should be an advantage for all individuals and I want to work to that end. Others, like remaining oblivious to others, I want to put an end to, because all they do is encourage a hierarchical structure among people; they disadvantage people. Before I can put an end to anything, I have to be sure that I am no longer using that advantage myself. The starting point is with my own introspection. The more involved I have become as an ally, the more privileges I see. With that as a brief introduction, consider the following:

---

*Continued on next page*

## Heterosexism and Heterosexual Privilege, continued

---

1. I can arrange to be in the company of people of my sexual orientation if I want, any time I want.
  2. If I have to move I can be reasonably assured of financing based on the household's two incomes.
  3. I can be reasonably sure my neighbors will be pleasant towards me.
  4. I can walk the streets with my significant other and feel safe when holding hands or kissing or hugging.
  5. I can turn to the news media and see or read of issues that are important to me. (...and not just about me as a topic of discussion.)
  6. Curriculum materials of my children will address my sexual orientation.
  7. When I go into a bookstore or record shop, I will readily find things that pertain to my sexual orientation.
  8. While traveling on public transportation, I can read materials pertaining to my sexual orientation.
  9. The police will respond to my calls for help.
  10. I can speak out in public and have it looked at positively.
  11. When I am in the hospital, no one questions who is in my immediate family.
  12. When there is a death in the family, I am not questioned when I wish to attend the funeral.
  13. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my sexual orientation.
  14. I can be oblivious to other people's issues.
  15. When I want to talk to the boss, I can be pretty sure the boss is of my sexual orientation.
  16. I can rent a motel room and not fear of being arrested.
  17. I can display pictures and objects that are most important to me.
  18. I can use the pronouns I wish without drawing unusual attention to myself.
  19. I can socialize with my partner just about any place.
  20. The sex of my partner will not exclude me from the child adoption process.
  21. I can be true to who I am.
  22. When I turn on the TV, I can readily see shows that pertain to my sexual orientation.
  23. My sexual orientation is not a threat in the work place.
  24. I can get married.
-

# Consequences of Heterosexism and Homophobia

---

## How Homophobia Hurts Us All

---

You do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual, or know someone who is, to be negatively affected by homophobia. Though homophobia actively oppresses lesbians, gay men, and people who are bi-sexual, it also hurts heterosexuals.

- Homophobia 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.
- Homophobia locks people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression.
- Homophobia is often used to stigmatize heterosexuals: those perceived or labeled by others to be gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual; children of gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual parents; parents of gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual children; and friends of gay men, lesbians, and bi-sexual persons.
- Homophobia compromises human integrity by pressuring people to treat others badly, actions that are contrary to their basic humanity.
- Homophobia, combined with sex-phobia (fear of the act of sex), results in the invisibility or erasure of gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual lives and sexuality in school-based sex education discussions, keeping vital information from students. Such erasures can kill people in the age of AIDS.
- Homophobia is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chance of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Young people of all sexual identities are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are “normal.”
- Homophobia prevents some gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual people from developing an authentic self-identity and adds to the pressure to marry, which places undue stress and, often times, trauma on themselves, as well as their heterosexual spouses and their children.

---

*Continued on next page*

## Consequences of Heterosexism and Homophobia, continued

---

- Homophobia inhibits appreciation of the 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 also striving for a society that accepts and celebrates the differences in all of us.

*Blumfeld, W.J. (1992). Homophobia: How we all pay the price. Boston: Beacon Press.*

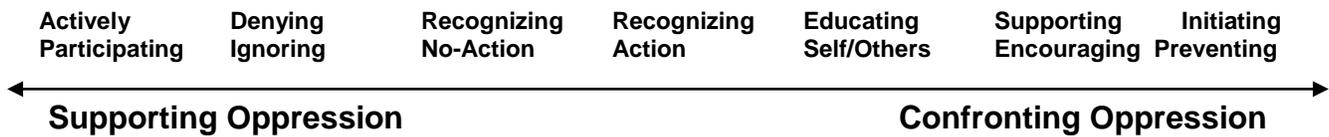
---

# Closure – Safe Space I

---

## Ally Action Continuum

---



**Actively Participating:** Telling oppressive jokes, putting down people from target groups intentionally avoiding target group members, discrimination against target group members, verbally or physically harassing target group members.

**Denying, Ignoring:** Enabling oppression by denying that target group members are oppressed. Does not actively oppress, but by denying that oppression exists, colludes with oppression.

**Recognizing, No Action:** Is aware of oppressive actions by self or others and their harmful effects, but takes no action to stop this behavior. This inaction is the result of fear, lack of information, confusion about what to do. Experiences discomfort at the contradiction.

**Recognizing, Action:** Is aware of oppression, recognizes oppressive actions of self and others and takes action to stop it.

**Educating Self:** Taking actions to learn more about oppression and the experiences and heritage of target group members by reading, attending workshops, seminars, cultural events, participating in discussions, joining organizations or groups that oppose oppression, attending social action and change events.

**Educating Others:** Moving beyond only educating self to question and dialogue with others too. Rather than only stopping oppressive comments or behaviors, also engaging people in discussion to share why you object to a comment or action.

**Supporting, Encouraging:** Supporting others who speak out against oppression or who are working to be more inclusive of target group members by backing up others who speak out, forming an allies group, joining a coalition group.

**Initiating, Preventing:** Working to change individual and institutional actions and policies that discriminate against target group members, planning educational programs or other events, working for passage of legislation that protects target group members from discrimination, being explicit about making sure target group members are full participants in organization or groups.

## Closure – SafeSpace I, continued

---

If you would like to find out what RA's are doing around these issues across the US go online and check out Resident Assistant .com.

