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Information on LGBT People

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INFORMATION ABOUT LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE

1. **Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people cannot be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.** People who are lesbians, gay, or bisexual come in as many different shapes, colors, and sizes as do heterosexuals. In fact, many heterosexuals portray a variety of the so-called lesbian and gay mannerisms

2. **Most lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are comfortable with being their biological sex; they do not regard themselves as members of the other sex.** Being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not the same thing as being transsexual, where a person feels that they are the wrong biological sex

3. **The majority of child molesters are heterosexual men, not lesbian, gay, or bisexual women and men.** Over 90% of child molestation is committed by heterosexual men against young girls. The overwhelming majority of lesbians and gay men have no interest in sexual activity with children.

4. **Sexual experiences as a child are not necessarily indicative of one's sexual orientation as an adult.** There is a huge difference between sexual activity and sexual attraction

5. Many, and perhaps most, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have early heterosexual experiences, but are still lesbian, gay, or bisexual; many avowed heterosexuals have had sexual contact including orgasm with members of their own sex, but are still heterosexual.

6. Some lesbian, gay, and bisexual people know at an early age -- sometimes as soon as 7 or 8 years old -- that they are attracted to their own sex. Some people learn much later in life, in their 60s and 70s. Some research indicates that sexual orientation is determined between birth and age 3. And having said all that, no one knows what causes sexual orientation

7. **It is impossible to convert heterosexuals to being homosexual.** Based on what is known about sexual attraction, this is simply not possible, nor is it possible to convert homosexuals to being heterosexual

8. Although homosexual "seduction" does occur, it is far less common than heterosexual "seduction", and, in fact, it may be even less common due to the fact that heterosexuals may react with hostility to sexual advances from members of their own sex. This misinformation, together with the misinformation about molestation, is the basis for attempts to keep lesbians and gay men from working with children.

9. **Homosexuality is not a type of mental illness and cannot be "cured" by appropriate psychotherapy.** Although homosexuality was once thought to be a mental illness the American Psychiatric Association and American Psychological Associations no longer consider homosexuality to be a mental illness. Some people believe that it is homophobia that needs to be cured

10. Most psychiatric and psychological attempts to "cure" lesbians and gay men have failed to change the sexual attraction of the patient, and instead, have resulted in creating emotional trauma. Many lesbians and gay men have known heterosexuals who tried to convert them to being heterosexual, without success.

11. **Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have the same range of sexual activity - from none to a lot -- as heterosexuals do.** Some lesbians, gay, and bisexual people are celibate, some have been in monogamous relationships for decades, some have had several lovers across a lifetime, and some have many sexual partners in any given period of time

*from The Campaign To End Homophobia, 1990
WRITTEN BY COOPER THOMPSON, et al*

12. If you think about all the heterosexuals you know, they, too, fall across a spectrum of sexual activity and types of relationships. What is different is that we have gotten more information about the sexuality of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and little information about the diversity and depth of their relationships.

13. For example, the only "homosexual" stories generally covered by the mainstream media are sensational ones -- bath house raids, a gay man accused of molesting school boys, or a case of lesbian battering -- while the everyday lives of most lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are effectively kept secret or never discussed in a matter-of-fact way.

14. Many people accuse lesbian, gay, and bisexual people of "flaunting" their sexuality when they talk about their partner, hold hands or briefly kiss one another in public. And yet these are activities that heterosexual couples do all the time -- in fact, some heterosexual couples do much more than this in public. Who's flaunting their sexuality?

15. **There is no definable "gay lifestyle."** In fact, there is no standard heterosexual lifestyle. Although some people might like to think that a "normal" adult lifestyle is a heterosexual marriage with 2 children, less than 7% of all family units in the United States consist of a mother, father, and two children living together.

16. Think of all the heterosexuals you know. How many have similar lifestyles?

17. Although there are many widely held stereotypes about people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, the most accurate generalization might be this: lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are different from one another in the same way that heterosexual people are different from one another.

18. People who are lesbian, gay, and bisexual work in all types of jobs and they live in all types of situations. They belong to all ethnic and racial groups. They are members of all religious, spiritual, and faith communities. They have different mental and physical abilities. They are young, middle-aged, and old.

19. Whatever is generally true about heterosexual people is probably true about lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, with two important exceptions: their sexual attraction is different, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are affected by homophobia in powerful and unique ways.

20. Each day, they must face oppression because of their sexual attraction. This affects decisions about jobs, family, friends, and housing -- virtually all aspects of what most people would consider "everyday" living.

21. Sometimes the oppression escalates into acts of verbal and physical violence. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force received reports of 7,248 incidents of anti-gay violence and victimization in 1988 in the United States; actual levels are presumed to be much higher. In surveys of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, 52% to 87% have been verbally harassed, 21% to 27% have been pelted with objects, 13% to 38% have been chased or followed, and 9% to 24% have been physically assaulted.

22. Despite all of this, many lesbian, gay, and bisexual people live proud, fulfilled lives. Many are committed to educating others about homophobia as well as caring for themselves and other members of their communities.