

MYTHS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

Myth 1: Homosexuality is linked with problems in a child's relationship with parents, such as a domineering or possessive mother and an ineffectual or hostile father.

Myth 2: Homosexuality involves a fear or hatred of people of the other sex, leading individuals to direct their sexual desires toward members of their own sex.

Myth 3: Homosexuality is just a passing phase, a period of sexual experimentation.
(This is true for some people, but not for most people who “come out” as LGBT.)

Myth 4: Homosexuality is a choice.
(There is no evidence to support suppositions that sexual orientation – heterosexual or homosexual – is a matter of choice; however, “coming out” as either straight or gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender is a matter of choice.)

Myth 5: Homosexuality is caused when children were victimized, seduced, molested or sexually assaulted by an adult homosexual. There is no biological basis for homosexuality.
(New research indicates that sexual orientation is at least partly biological, as the brain may differ with sexual orientation.)

Myth 6: Homosexuality is a mental disorder.
(In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed the term homosexuality from the list of mental and emotional disorders stating sexual orientation is not a disorder.)

Myth 7: Homosexuality can be cured.
(In 2009, the American Psychological Association officially endorsed a resolution that concluded “that there is insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation.”)

Myth 8: Homosexual men are pedophiles. (The preponderance of convicted pedophiles are self-acknowledged heterosexual males.)

Myth 9: LGBT parents raise their children to be homosexual.
(Just as most LGBT children grow up with heterosexual parents, most children of LGBT parents grow up to be heterosexual.)

Myth 10: Homosexuality is illegal.
(Homosexuality has been decriminalized throughout the United States. Whereas being homosexual is no longer illegal, it is true that the legal rights of LGBT individuals are not protected in many states and cities throughout the U.S.)
(As of October 2010, laws criminalizing same sex relations still exist in approximately 76 countries worldwide, including imposition of the death penalty in 5 countries.)

Some Questions to Help Assess Your “True Acceptance” Of An Individual Who May Be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning

(This is not an exhaustive list of questions, but merely offer some general guidance to assess your level of acceptance. You must allow yourself to answer these questions honestly vs. giving the “politically correct” response.)

-What is your comfort level when an LGBTQ individual talks about his/her dating relationships or life partner?

-What is your comfort level when you are in the physical presence of an LGBTQ individual AND her/his dating or life partner?

-What is your comfort level when an LGBTQ individual is open or casual about his/her same sex identity?

-Do you find the thought of an LGBTQ individual actually marrying her/his partner to be normal or abhorrent?

-What is your comfort level with the reality of gay sex?

-What is your comfort level with the terms "homosexual," "gay," "lesbian," "transgender," or "queer?"

-Are you unable to comprehend ‘What on earth is going on in the mind of an LGBTQ individual?

-Do you spend time contemplating whether an LGBTQ individual can be cured of his/her homosexuality?

-Do you find yourself judging whether someone is straight or LGBTQ based on their external physical appearance, mannerisms, or image?

-Do you feel anxious about what others might think of you if you are fully accepting of an LGBTQ individual with whom you have contact?

-Do Are you concerned that being LGBT means your young adult is going to live a lonely, miserable life?

-Do you assume that being LGBTQ implies that individual either will never have children or does not want children?

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Some information in this handout was based on material from the following resources:

Bidstrup, Scott. (2006) *My Child is GAY! Now What Do I Do?* www.bidstrup.com/parents.htm

Goldman, Linda. (2008). *Coming out, Coming In: Nurturing the Well-Being and Inclusion of Gay Youth in Mainstream America.*

Ryan, C. (2009). *Helping Families Support Their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Children.* Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.