

Straight From the Heart

A Discussion Guide

written by

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supplemental materials

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INTENDED AUDIENCE — 12 years old and up

ESTIMATED TIME —

Pre-view Discussion, 5-10 minutes

Setup and video screening, 30 minutes

Post-viewing discussion, 20-40 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED —

Straight From the Heart video Cassette and Discussion Guide, TV and VCR, optional handouts

Straight From the Heart Study Guide

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Introduction

Straight from the Heart is an Academy Award-nominated documentary short that addresses the issues parents face when coming to terms with having a gay or lesbian child. It presents simple stories about real people: a police chief who talks about how proud he is of his lesbian daughter, a Mormon couple whose son is believed to be the first gay man in Idaho to have died from AIDS, and a black woman and her two lesbian daughters who had been accused of “catching” their lesbianism from white people.

Straight from the Heart is appropriate for use in churches; community settings; counseling, foster parent education, and HIV/AIDS prevention programs; and internal diversity/tolerance trainings, among many other usages. It is widely used for curriculum-based instruction in high schools, colleges and universities in Social Studies, Health/Sex Education, Lesbian-Gay/Multicultural Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology Human Sexuality, Theology & Religion Studies, Residence Life & Student Programs, and in Teacher, Staff & Administration diversity Training. *Straight from the Heart* was designed to facilitate discussions on topics like homophobia and heterosexism, sexual orientation, cultural diversity, familial and community ties, AIDS and other forms of prejudice, social justice issues, and constructs of heterosexism & heterosexual privilege.

This discussion guide is intended to facilitate exercises and discussions that, in conjunction with the video screening, offer lessons in diversity and in gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues. This discussion guide provides a framework upon which to base discussions, but is by no means a complete guide for discussion and teaching about lesbian/gay issues. In the Appendix we have provided a list of recommended resources for those who wish to delve further into the issues touched upon in *Straight from the Heart*.

Straight from the Heart was produced to foster greater tolerance for and understanding of the issues that gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people face in this society. After watching and discussing *Straight from the Heart*, the audience should have a deeper understanding of the following issues:

- the existence and visibility of gay and lesbian people
- understandings of terms like “gay”, “lesbian”, “homosexual”, heterosexual” and “straight”
- the suffering afflicted by and associated with name-calling, rejection and all prejudicial treatment
- the stigma associated with having a gay or lesbian child or being labeled gay or lesbian
- The inter-relatedness of all forms of discrimination and bigotry

Note: For the purpose of this discussion guide, the word “gay” is often used in the collective sense to mean gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals, rights, and issues.

WHAT IS HOMOSEXUALITY?

The word “homosexual” was first used in 1869 and combines the Greek word “Homo” meaning *same* with the Latin word “sexual” meaning *sex*. Journalist Eric Marcus defines a homosexual as being “a man or woman whose feelings of sexual attraction are for someone of the same sex.” (Marcus, *Is it a Choice?*, p.1). The word lesbian is used to describe a homosexual woman, and the word gay is used to describe a homosexual man. In the late 1980’s, the word “queer” was reclaimed by a younger generations of homosexuals; it can be used as an inclusive term for both men and women. The gender to which a specific individual is sexually attracted is termed their “sexual orientation”.

WHY ARE PEOPLE GAY OR LESBIAN?

While there is no one answer to this question, many theories have been advanced throughout history. Many lesbians and gay men will reply: “It’s just how I feel.” Some of the ideas that have been posed over the years include: the classic overbearing mother/absent father produces gay man

theory; the hormone fluctuations during fetus development theory; and the sexual abuse by males makes a woman a lesbian theory. Given our current level of knowledge about what determines sexual orientation, these theories have been discarded by responsible researchers. Recent studies focus on discovering whether homosexuality is genetically determined. However little attention has been paid to determining why people are heterosexual.

HOW ARE HOMOSEXUALS DIFFERENT FROM HETEROSEXUALS?

Gay people come in all shapes and sizes, are all ages, all colors, from all classes and walks of life, are members of all ethnic and racial groups, belong to all religious denominations and work in all professions and occupations. Lesbians and gay men are top business executives (like David Geffen), police officers, office temps, ministers, librarians, actors, mothers and fathers, sanitation engineers, sports heroes (like Martina Navratilova and Greg Louganis), teachers, lawyers, sales clerks, musicians (like Elton John and Melissa Etheridge), lifeguards, cooks and physicians, to list but a few examples. The only real difference between heterosexuals and homosexuals is the gender of their mate.

GAY RIGHTS IN AMERICA

The United States of America was founded on the principle concept of freedom. The spirit of freedom flows deeply through the course of U.S. History. As Americans, we have fought many battles for equal rights and equal access for all people. Gay men and lesbians have suffered from both invisibility and persecution throughout history. The public struggle for legal protection for homosexuals is relatively new. The greater openness of the 20th Century has begun to give us a written record of discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Recent books about the Holocaust have started to include information on the persecution and extermination of thousands of homosexuals.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STRUGGLE FOR GAY RIGHTS

June 1969 marks the “official” beginning of the gay and lesbian rights movement. Gay men, lesbians and drag queens rebelled against police harassment at the Stonewall Inn, a bar in Greenwich Village. However, the Stonewall Rebellion was not the first call for rights for homosexuals. German scientist Magnus Hirschfeld conducted a study of homosexuality in the German military during World War I. His work and his books were all destroyed in 1933 during the rise of Nazism. During the 1940’s, the mass migrations of people caused by the Second World War led to the development of gay and lesbian subcultures in urban areas as more and more homosexuals learned there were other people “just like them”. Some of the first national gay and lesbian social organizations were founded in the 1950’s. These groups—the Mattachine Society for gay men and the Daughters of Bilitis for lesbians—gave homosexuals a place to gather without fear of police harassment, a place to discuss other problems, and an organizational basis that enabled them to publish national magazines. Also during the 1950’s, Dr. Evelyn Hooker, a research psychologist, published her pioneering research on homosexuality. (Her work led the American Psychological and Psychiatric Associations to remove homosexuality from their lists of mental disorders in the early 1970’s).

In the early 1960’s, The Council on the Church and the Homosexual, and the Society for Individual Rights (SIR) were founded in San Francisco. Their goals were two-fold.

1. To give homosexual people further protection from police initiated privacy violations.
2. To provide a forum for more discussion of homosexuality

In 1965, some of the first public demonstrations advocating gay and lesbian rights occurred in Washington, DC and Philadelphia. *Life* and *Time* did major stories on homosexuality. By the time the Stonewall Rebellion took place, there were over 40 gay and lesbian groups in the United States (Marcus, *Is it a Choice?*, p. 181).

Many of the social change movements of this time were laying the foundations for what appeared to be the sudden explosion of gay and lesbian activism. The women’s movement was exploring the boundaries of society for women and their ability to control their lives, sexuality and futures. Through the efforts of the civil rights movement, laws against interracial marriages were found unconstitutional and these unions were legalized in all 50 states.

The 1970’s was a hopeful decade for gay men and lesbians. Many states were repealing the victimless crimes statutes within their penal codes. Cities, counties, and states were passing non-discrimination laws, and police departments were slowly reducing their harassment of gay people in public places. The period culminated with the election of openly homosexual people to public offices, including Harvey Milk in San Francisco. The future looked bright for gay men and lesbians in the United States.

Just as things were looking up, tragedy struck. With the advent of the AIDS epidemic, the optimism, hope and energy of the 1970’s had to be redirected into the battle against a disease that had no name, no known cause, and little support or compassion from mainstream society. The disease that was first reported by the *New York Times* in 1981 as effecting about 20 gay men who suffered rare forms of cancer and pneumonia has today taken the lives of more than 300,000 Americans. During the earliest stages of the epidemic, homosexual people realized that they would have to provide the moral leadership to try to find a cure. Throughout the course of the epidemic, gay men and lesbians have been at the forefront of prevention, care, and treatment developments on the grassroots level, in government and in private industry. Because of the AIDS epidemic, many family members and friends who had previously shunned the gay people in their lives have been reunited with them. These same people have also gained a new understanding of lesbians and gay men—they now were coming to understand that gay people are people just like themselves.

As the lesbian and gay “community” entered the second decade of the AIDS pandemic, they had grown to understand that they were involved in a protracted battle. New leadership emerged, including a generation of younger gay men and lesbians who changed the movement’s direction. The new emphasis focused on gaining full equality in American society. In 1993, the discussion surrounding the United States military policy toward homosexuals clearly showed our citizenry how easily lesbians and gay men can lose their jobs, be evicted from their homes, or have their children taken away simply for saying that they are homosexual, and nothing more.

Since the controversy over gays in the military erupted in the early 1990’s, the movement for gay rights has progressed slowly and steadily forward. In a symbolic gesture in 1995, President Clinton finally repealed the executive order (issued during the height of the Red Scare in the 1950’s) that prevented homosexuals from being employed by the federal government. Since the repeal of that executive order, most cabinet-level departments and agencies added sexual orientation to their equal employment policies, but these policies were not uniformly administered. In May 1998, Clinton signed an executive order adding sexual orientation to the list of categories for which discrimination is illegal in civilian federal employment. (The other categories are race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicaps and age.) This new executive order ensures a uniform policy for civilian workers throughout the federal government.

The 1990’s have been and will continue to be marked by the Constitutional deliberations regarding same-sex marriage, parental rights and equal status in the workplace for lesbians and gay men.

- of violence against *perceived* lesbians and gay men. In 1993, they reported 2,031 incidents of gay-related hate crimes and 2,064 cases in 1994. These figures are significantly higher than the number of cases reported by local police agencies.
- Unlike the majority of crimes, a high percentage of hate crimes against gay people are perpetuated by two or more assailants. This means that injuries suffered are often very serious in nature.
- According to a recent Seattle study, for every gay or lesbian youth being harassed, another four heterosexual kids were being beaten up or tormented because they were *perceived* to be gay.
- A 1989 study commissioned by the US Department of Health and Human Services found that gay and lesbian youth are in one of the highest risk categories for attempting suicide. “Gay youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than other young people. They may comprise up to 30% of completed youth suicides annually.” (Remafedi, *Death by Denial: Studies of Suicide in Gay & Lesbian Teenagers*, p. 15)
- Gay men and lesbians have been found to be at higher risk for alcohol addiction than their heterosexual counterparts.
- Perhaps one of the most frightening aspects of homophobia is the marked increase in anti-gay legislative attempts throughout the United States. According to the *Washington Blade*, the numbers of anti-gay measures have increased substantially from five in 1984 to 24 in 1994. More than 40 anti-gay ballot measures have passed since 1991.

WHY ARE GAY RIGHTS IMPORTANT TO HETEROSEXUAL AMERICANS?

Gay rights are central to the continuing defense of individual liberty in the United States.

An excellent book on this subject is attorney Michael Nava and history professor Robert Dawidoff’s *Created Equal: Why Gay Rights Matter to America*. In the book, Nava and Dawidoff argue that American citizens who happen to be gay are first and foremost citizens of this country. And as such, they are entitled to the same rights afforded to every individual American citizen under the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. To abridge the citizenship rights of gay people will not only affect the fate of gays, but the future of the constitutional principal and the

rights of free individuals in American society. The basic arguments that Nava and Dawidoff make in the book are:

1. The purpose of the US constitutional government is the protection of individual rights.
2. Gays and lesbians, as American citizens, are entitled to the exercise of these rights.
3. Demonstrably, gays and lesbians are denied free exercise of these rights.
4. The grounds for denying gay rights are rooted in ignorance.
5. The organized opponents of gay rights, who exploit ignorance and bias, would substitute sectarian religious morality in place of constitutional guarantees that allow individuals to determine how best to live their lives.
6. The anti-gay rights forces are using the issue of rights for gay people as a test case to promote a broader agenda, the purpose of which is to limit individual liberties in the country.

Ask yourself: Does legislation that effects lesbian parental rights have legal ramifications for the parental rights of heterosexual women as well? Does the right of gay men and lesbians to adopt children or become foster parents, either a single adults or as a couple, have an impact on heterosexual rights in these areas? Does hate crimes legislation that includes protections for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people also protect heterosexual people? Does legislation that protects gay people from discrimination in the workplace and in housing protect non-gays, too? Do legal prohibitions against sodomy have consequences for heterosexuals? Does gay marriage or domestic partnership legislation have legal ramifications for heterosexual people? These are among the issues we must consider when trying to understand how failure to extend equal rights and protections to homosexual people will effect the civil and political rights of all Americans, homosexual or heterosexual.

ATTACKS ON GAY RIGHTS

When gays began to “come out” after the Stonewall Rebellion, their new openness was met with both opposition and hatred. This animosity was nothing new to the gay people who had already faced years of police harassment, arrests, vice squad intimidation, and personal affronts—and nobody talked about it. The ferocity of the hatred that has galvanized the reactionary right into a political movement over the last three decades is the significant change.

The 1970’s was a turbulent time for gays. Just as gays began to enjoy being out, and gain political and social power and acceptance, gay organizations and institutions were attacked. Arson was one of the first methods used to attack gay centers—mostly gay churches associated with the Metropolitan Community Church. Just as new laws were being passed to protect homosexuals from discrimination in counties and cities across the country, a backlash movement began developing.

The most publicized anti-gay campaign of the 1970’s was led by Anita Bryant, a Miss America runner-up and Florida orange juice spokesperson. In 1977, her crusade to repeal a Dade County, FL anti-discrimination law used myths and stereotypes about lesbians and gay men to manufacture voter anxiety. Gay men and lesbians came together and started the first campaign to defeat a ballot measure that targeted homosexuals. Since then, there has been a marked increase in numbers of these anti-gay ballot measures. In the last few years, two of the most watched statewide anti-gay campaigns were Oregon’s Measure 9, and Colorado’s Amendment 2. The Supreme Court recently found Amendment 2 to be unconstitutional; Oregon’s Measure 9 was narrowly defeated. Subsequently, the Oregon Citizen’s Alliance (OCA), sponsor of Measure 9, has been able to enact similar legislation in local municipal areas throughout the state. The OCA is now adding attacks on a woman’s right to choose to their repertoire of hate campaigns.

EQUAL RIGHTS VS. SPECIAL RIGHTS

African Americans were accused of seeking “special rights” during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s. Now, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people are accused of seeing “special rights”. Both populations are simply seeking equal justice under the law.

Unfortunately, gay rights have become the lightning rod in the rise of the reactionary right’s “Christian” or “family values” campaigns. Current and proposed legislation does not provide for any unusual or special treatment of gay people. *Gay rights* are NOT *special rights* and do not provide for either quotas in hiring or affirmative action. (A recent decision by the University of California Board of Regents used similar language and rationale when ending affirmative action in the university by calling equal access a “special right”.)

It is important to understand that gay rights laws only state that discrimination based on sexual orientation is illegal.

Other Topics of Interest

PROOF-TEXTING: HOMOSEXUALITY & RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The reactionary and “Christian” right uses Biblical interpretations to condemn gays and support “family values.” In *Straight from the Heart*, Mitsi Henderson, the mother of a gay man, says that “Growing up I had never heard any of the passages that are now cited about homosexuality. It was never a major factor in Christian education.” She goes on to state that when her son told her that he was gay, “I then had to look at those six or seven passages, and I found that I felt that they were being misused. They were being abused in a form that we in the church call proof-texting. They were being pulled out of context. They were being pulled out to support an already formed opinion rather than used within the context of God’s revelation of love and his reconciling redemption for all people and his call to relationship.”

While we do not intend to delve into religious issues within this discussion guide, it is important to put the issue of proof-texting into some perspective. With that intent in mind, here are some facts:

- There are 105 different versions of the Bible printed in English alone. There are over 350 Protestant denominations in America. Each one has its own set of beliefs, and the 105 different bibles reflect different and often contradictory translations.
- The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years by various authors. Nothing was written as it happened, but was passed down by work of mouth over the years.
- Out of the 31,176 verses in the Bible, less than .0002% refers to same sex behavior.
- The word “homosexual” is not in the Bible. It was not invented until 1869.
- Jesus Christ never said anything about or alluded to homosexuals or homosexuality.

Editor’s Note: If you wish to explore the issue of biblical interpretations of homosexuality in greater depth, please do contact us. In addition to printed information, Dr. Sylvia Rhue, co-producer of the film *Straight from the Heart*, is available for speaking engagements on multicultural issues, gender inequities, biblical interpretations and on sex and sexual orientation. She is a licensed clinical social worker, writer and educator, bible scholar/student, and the first African American to earn a Doctorate in Human Sexuality. Her presentations offer concrete and accurate information, and address these often-difficult issues with taste and humor.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION & SELF-ESTEEM

HIV/AIDS education is important for all sectors of this society: men and women, gay and straight, young and old. In a study entitled "Homophobia, Self-Esteem and Risk for HIV among African American Men Who Have Sex with Men," Professor Joseph P. Stokes, Department of Psychology at University of Illinois at Chicago, and John L. Peterson wrote that "there are a number of possible reasons why people who are psychologically distressed might engage in behaviors that put them at risk for HIV. Feeling valued and valuable might be necessary preconditions to behaviors that protect from HIV. People who feel depressed and hopeless might lack the motivation to decrease their risk for HIV. Individuals with low self-esteem may be especially likely to try to hide their same-sex attraction from others." Some of the African American men in the Stokes-Peterson study reported that they saw "a clear and relatively simple progression from self-acceptance of homosexuality to increased self-esteem to decreased behaviors that put one at risk for HIV."

Films like *Straight from the Heart* and *All God's Children* are important tools for helping at risk people, particularly at risk youth, build the self-esteem that is so necessary to reducing risky behaviors. Many organizations and institutions are using our films in their HIV/AIDS prevention work with youth, prisoners, in minority communities, counseling programs, health education programs and in other educational settings across the country. Among these organizations are: AID Atlanta, American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR), Gay Men's Health Crisis, Long Island Minority AIDS Coalition, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and Southwest Family Practice & Counseling Center.

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Straight from the Heart can stir up strong feelings. Try to create a safe and open space for people to express their emotions. This includes discussing issues of confidentiality with the group ahead of time. It is important for people to know that their experiences, feelings, and reactions are not necessarily for public consumption. Discuss these issues before viewing the video.

Before screening the video, explain to the group that the purpose of this screening and discussion is to explore homophobia and heterosexism and how they affect all of us. Define homophobia and heterosexism, and provide examples of each.

When viewing the film, ask people to be thinking about:

- Their general reaction to the film
- What they learned
- What they might disagree with or be skeptical about
- The questions it raised

Before beginning any discussion, ask the group to agree on some guidelines for that discussion. Some suggested guidelines for discussion include:

- Share the discussion time, avoid dialogues
- No put downs
- Speak from own experience, avoid generalizing
- Listen respectfully, no interrupting
- Everyone has the right to listen without being expected to participate in the discussion
- Expect different perspectives
- Respect confidentiality
- Be open to learning something new

QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO EXPLORE WITH THE GROUP

From the Video

- What have you learned about homosexuals and homosexuality from the video *Straight from the Heart*?
- Has your opinion about lesbians and gays changed after seeing this film?
- Is homosexuality just a *White Issue*? Or are there Black lesbians and gay men? Asian? Native American? Eskimo? Latino/a?

Is there a credible case against homosexuality in the Bible?

General Questions

- Was homosexuality a part of society before the term “homosexuality” was coined?
- Do any of you know any homosexual people? If yes, are these people significantly different from the heterosexual people you know?
- Why are people homosexual? Have you ever asked yourself: Why am I heterosexual? When does the awareness that one is heterosexual occur?
- Is it important to know why someone is homosexual? If yes, why is this?

Living in the World

- Do you think that a person’s sexual orientation is always obvious?
- What kind of jobs do gay people hold?

- Does someone's sexual orientation affect his or her job performance or potential in the workplace? If yes, how so?
- Do you take your personal life to your workplace? Classroom? Church? Everywhere? Do you chat about your spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, and/or your children with co-workers and friends?

Name Calling

- Have you ever experienced discrimination? Are you left-handed in a right-handed world? Have you been called Fatso or Ugly? Dummy or Retard? Spic or Wetback? Chink or Gook? Fag, Faggot, Sissy or Girl? Dyke? Nigger? Queer? Jap? Crip? An Abomination? Unclean? White trash? Hillbilly? How does being on the receiving end of any of these epithets make you feel?
- Why do you think people participate in name calling? What is their purpose? Is name calling a positive or a negative behavior?

Discrimination

- Is discrimination based on appearance, level of ability or disability, ethnic or racial origin, class, sexual orientation, gender, skin color, nationality, handed-ness, or any other category either fair or democratic?
- Can these types of prejudice be justified either legally or personally? If yes, how? If no, what can you do to help end discrimination on a personal level? On a political level? In a social situation?

Are all forms of discrimination or bigotry related? If no, how are they different? If yes, how are they related?

- Are some forms of bigotry or prejudice more "important" or "primary" than others? If yes, which are more important and why? And is this level of importance universal or situational?
- Is it fair to deny a group of people the ability to earn a living, live where they want, raise children or attend the church of their choice simply because of their sexual orientation? Are these *special rights*?
- In the United States, we fight for civil rights and political rights on a piecemeal basis. Is this sensible? Fair? Cost-effective?
- Do you think lesbians and gays face a great deal of discrimination?

How would you feel...

- If you were gay or lesbian, how would you cope with your fear of bodily injury, of losing your family or home, or of losing your job?
- How would you react if our government ignored violations of your civil protections?

Anti-gay Prejudice and Violence: Who Are the Victims?

- Do you think that heterosexual people are harassed and seriously hurt because they are *perceived* to be gay?
- Do you think that some heterosexual people are discriminated against in jobs or housing because they are *perceived* to be gay?

Anti-gay Legislation: Who Loses

- Do you think that the scope of legislation passed to sanction discrimination against gay people affects only gay people? If yes, why do you think this? If no, please give some examples as to how heterosexual people might be also adversely affected by anti-gay legislation.
- Aside from anti-gay legislation, what other types of legislation are promoted by the organizations and people who are opposed to equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people.
- Who are the people and organizations pushing anti-gay legislation? Are they the same people who have been the historical oppressors of African Americans? What are their beliefs about women's rights?

Racist, reactionary "religious" right-winger are now reaching out to Black churches. Why do you think they are doing this?

Appendix

DEFINITION OF TERMS

HOMOSEXUALITY and HETEROSEXUALITY These are relatively new words or terms. The word “Homosexuality”: combines the Greek work *Homo* meaning *same* with the Latin word *sexual* meaning *sex*; the word “Heterosexuality” combines the Greek word *Hetero* meaning *different* with the Latin word *sexual* meaning *sex*. Both of these words were invented or coined by an Austro-Hungarian writer named Karl Maria Kertbeny in 1868. Usage of these terms began in the United States about 100 years ago. Although the terms “heterosexual”, “bisexual”, and “homosexual” are relatively new to the English lexicon, the sexual attractions they refer to have been around since the beginning of time.

HOMOSEXUALITY may be defined as the erotic, emotional, social and spiritual attraction of men towards men, and women towards women.

HETEROSEXUALITY may be defined as the erotic, emotional, social and spiritual attraction of men towards women, and women towards men.

HETEROSEXISM is the cultural, institutional and individual practices and beliefs based on the assumption that heterosexuality is the only acceptable sexual orientation. For example: Traditional beliefs about acceptable gender role behavior and the lack of information about sexual orientation leads some people to assume that all women in athletics are lesbians.

HOMOPHOBIA is the irrational fear or hatred of lesbians, gay men, bisexual or transgendered people.

LESBIAN / GAY / BISEXUAL / TRANSGENDER The word **LESBIAN** is used to describe a homosexual woman, and the word **GAY** is used to describe a homosexual man. Some homosexual women prefer the term “gay woman”. **BISEXUALS** have erotic/emotional attractions to both genders. **TRANSGENDER** is a term used to refer to people who have had their genders surgically reassigned, or are in some stage of that process.

QUEER is a word that was reclaimed by a younger generation of homosexuals in the late 1980’s. It can be used as an inclusive term for both men and women.

QUESTIONING is another term that has been claimed by the younger generation.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION is the gender to which a specific individual is sexually attracted. Sexual Orientation can be primarily “homosexual”, primarily “heterosexual” or “bisexual.”

SEXOLOGIST is a person who studies human and animal sexual behavior. Anthropology, biology, anatomy, world cultures, history, religion, and animal behavior are among the fields that sexologists study to obtain information on sexuality.

WHAT SEXOLOGISTS KNOW ABOUT SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- Sex and sexuality are naturally occurring phenomena. They are universal, existing in other cultures at all times.
- Sex and sexuality have been venerated in some cultures, and repressed and punished in others.
- Human beings are orgasm seekers; orgasms are achieved in a variety of ways.
- Sexuality is both wired into the brain and “elastic” (referring to a range of sexual behaviors).
- Humans and other beings use sex for reproductive purposes; they also use sex and sexuality for pleasure.
- Although reproduction of the species is obtained through sex, sex and reproduction are separable. In fact, a great deal of sexual behavior is not geared towards reproduction.
- Masturbation is a universal, healthy form of sexual expression.
- The brain is the largest sex organ.
- Homosexuality is evident throughout nature, has existed in all times, and is as natural for homosexuals as heterosexuality is for heterosexuals.
- The range of human sexual behaviors is as varied as the range of human sexual beings.
- Homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality are orientations, not choices.
- Sex and love can be combined or separated; sex and reproduction can be combined or separated.
- The human sexual response cycle—excitement, plateau, orgasm, resolution—is the same in every human regardless of sexual orientation.

African Americans

Sexually promiscuous
Sexually dangerous
Carriers of sexual disease can contaminate by touch
Socially marginal
Cannot control their sexuality
Seek special rights (i.e. affirmative action)
Condemned by God (Genesis) laws
Interracial marriage illegal until 1967
Inordinately talented: singing, dancing, athletics
Have agenda in opposition to white, male dominant culture
Criminal element in society
Wants to have sex with your sister
Important to keep Blacks out of history books
Feared & hated by dominant culture
Love/Hate relationship with Hollywood
White people seek out African Americans for clandestine sex and furtive sexual favors
Armed forces segregated until 1947 due to fear of sharing bathing facilities
Blacks are labeled “detriments to morale”
Anti-black jokes common
Anti-black violence common
Ridiculed and despised by talk radio
Taunted, hounded beaten & murdered for being Black
Did not choose to be Black but deserving discrimination anyway
Simply need to act “more white” to make it in it in mainstream culture
Destined to spend eternity in a segregated heaven

Homosexuals

Sexually promiscuous
Sexually dangerous
Carriers of sexual disease can contaminate by touch
Socially marginal
Cannot control their sexuality
Seek special rights (i.e. gay marriage)
Condemned by God (Leviticus) - Sodomy still on the books
Gay marriage unlawful
Inordinately talented: art, fashion, pop culture
Have agenda in opposition to white, male dominant culture
Criminal element in society
Wants to have sex with YOU
Important to keep gays out of history books
Feared & hated by dominant culture
Love/Hate relationship with Hollywood
Heterosexuals seek out homosexuals for clandestine sex and furtive sexual favors
Armed forces ban openly gay personnel due fear of sharing bathing facilities
Gays are labeled “detriments to morale”
Anti-gay jokes common
Anti-gay violence common
Ridiculed and despised by talk radio
Taunted, hounded beaten & murdered for gay
Deliberately chose to be gay and therefore of deserving of discrimination
Simply need to act “more straight” to make mainstream culture
Destined to spend eternity in a segregated hell

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SOME OTHER VIDEO RESOURCES

Camp Lavender Hill

Hybrid Productions (1997/28 min/VHS/Color) is a sensitive portrayal of the issues faced by the children of gay and lesbian parents. **Screening Honoree**, Mill Valley Film Festival's Children's Video Fest & Pacific Film Archives; **National Educational Media Award**. 1-888-999-0490

Note: There are discussion guides available for all these videos.

Gay Youth

Pam Walton Productions (1992/40min/VHS/Color) is the documentary short that broke the silence about adolescent homosexuality, including young gays' coming out, family and school experiences.

Cine Golden Eagle; Blue Ribbon American Film/Video Festival

To Order: 1-800-Get Wolfe

www.wolfevideo.com

Out for a Change: Addressing Homophobia in Women's Sports

Woman Vision (1995/28 min/VHS/Color) is a look at the devastating emotional impact of homophobia on all women athletes. *Out for a Change* makes the case that homophobia—like sexism and racism—is a wedge issue used to inhibit equal access for all women. **National Educational Media Award; Screening Honoree**, NCAA Women's National Basketball Coached Conference & NAGWS Symposium "Transcending Boundaries...The New Agenda in Sport"

To Order: 1-800-343-5540

Email: womanvsn@aol.com

www.Woman-Vision.org

All God's Children

Woman Vision(1996/26 min/VHS/Color) an examination of the effects of homophobia on African Americans that connects the dots between homophobia and racism. **Best Documentary** National Black Arts Festival; **Lambda Liberty Award; Special Merit Award for Public Affairs** National Black Programming Consortium; **Screening Honoree**, American Anthropological Association & Council on Foundations Film Festivals.

To Order: 1-800-343-5540

Email: womanvsn@aol.com

www.Woman-Vision.org

SOME ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Note: Many of the organizations listed below have offices throughout the country. We are providing contact information for their national headquarters only.

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)

248 West 35th Street, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 629.3322
www.glaad.org

Hetrick Martin Institute

2 Astor Place
New York, NY 10003
(212) 674.2400
www.hmi.org

Institute for First Amendment Studies

P.O. Box 589,
Great Barrington, MA 01230
(413) 528-3800
<http://www.ifas.org>

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

120 Wall Street, Suite 1500
New York, NY 10005-3904
(212)809-8585 phone
www.lambdalegal.org

National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum

1436 U Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 483-6786
www.blackstripe.org

National Center for Lesbian Rights

870 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 392-6527
www.nclrights.org

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 1700 Kalorama Road NW

Washington, DC 20009-2624
(202) 332-6483 TTY 202-332-6219
www.nglft.org

National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO)
420 K Street, NW
Ste 200
Washington, DC 20005
202) 408.5380
www.llego.org

Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment
(888) 214-9218
www.nwb.net/nwc/

Parents, Families and Friends for Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 467-8180
www.pflag.org

People for the American Way
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 467-4999
(800) 326-7329
pfaw@pfaw.org
(801)

*United Federation of Metropolitan
Community Churches (UFMCC)*
8704 Santa Monica Blvd. 2nd Fl. West Hollywood, CA 90069
(310) 360-8640
www.ufmcc.org

Unity Fellowship Church
5149 W. Jefferson Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(213) 936-4948
www.unityfellowshipchurch.org