

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

History shows that some men and women have been sexually attracted to people of their own gender at all times, and in all societies.

Modern research suggests that as many as 10% of our population are gay lesbian or bisexual. Even using the most conservative estimate of 1%, then in a city of 120,000, at least 1,200 people would be gay.

CHOICE

There are gay lesbian and bisexual men and women in every part of our communities, teachers, ministers, nurses doctors, people in business and trades, sportsmen and women. Gay people are of all ages, young children who are as yet unaware of their sexuality, young people beginning to come to terms with this aspect of their personality, adults, and old people too. Unless people choose to tell us, we tend to assume they are heterosexual, they may not be.

One thing they would all agree about is that they did not chose their sexual orientation. We all have choices about how we live our lives with the kind of sexuality we have been given.

COMING OUT

Because most people in our society are heterosexual, most of us grow up in families where opposite sex attraction is considered normal. Discovering that we feel differently can be a confusing experience. Acknowledging to ourselves that that our sexual preferences make us different from our friends is the first step in a process called 'Coming Out'. Sharing this information with others is the next .

You have probably thought for many weeks or months about coming out. Remember though, that for your family it may come as a shock. Be prepared with some information to help them to understand your situation. This may help you through what can be a difficult encounter. Check the reading list on the reverse of this leaflet.

Help available from PFLAG

If you are still considering how to cope with coming out, or if you have encountered difficulties, PFLAG South can provide information for you and your family. See our contacts on back of this leaflet.

SAFETY

Personal Safety

Be careful about choosing when, and with whom you will share this information about yourself. In our society there are some people who unfortunately, behave badly towards people they see as different from themselves. They can be abusive and even violent. When this prejudice is directed towards gays and lesbians it is called homophobia.

Sexual safety

There are many sexually transmitted diseases, some respond readily to medical treatment while others can result in long term disability and even death. HIV that leads to AIDS is of particular concern for gay men.

By their very nature, STDs are spread during sexual intimacy and we advise you to become properly informed before becoming involved in any sexual relationships, be they casual or long term.

MEETING OTHERS

Because there is no simple way of knowing who in our community is lesbian, gay, or bisexual, you might be wondering how you will ever make friends and perhaps find a partner. In our community there are a number of organisations that have been formed to help with this problem.

Pride Dunedin Youth

A support group for young men and women, 25 or younger, who are same sex attracted or unsure of their sexual orientation. P.D.Y. organises **Same - Difference**, a weekly social gathering, plus **Bloom** and **Icebreakers**, personal development groups for young people coming to terms with their sexuality. Email: pridedunedin youth@hotmail.com

W A Q D

For lesbians there is a new community based group called 'WAQD' They provide a safe space for queer women,(lesbian bisexual transgender and questioning) to hang out, have fun and meet new people. You can get information about WAQD from their website: [http:// www.waqd.netfirms.com](http://www.waqd.netfirms.com)

UniQ

This group is associated with the Otago University Students Union and provides support and activities for all GLBT students in the city. UniQ organises a range of events each year and welcomes and supports everyone in the GLBT community. Phone 479 5449
Email UniQ@ousa.org.nz

The Otago Gaily Times

This is a quarterly publication for, and about the GLBT community in Otago. It provides information about upcoming events and a comprehensive directory of support organisations. Check their website <http://home.gay.com/OGT/>

PFLAG South

We have contact with GLBT organisations in Dunedin and beyond. If you need further information we are happy to assist. See the reverse of this leaflet for our contact details.

GOOD NEWS

The good news is that discovering you are lesbian gay or bisexual is not the end of the world. rather, it is the beginning of a new adventure.

Your life will be different from now on. It holds amazing possibilities and opportunities. Remember, what counts is not what people say you are, but how you live your life .

RECOMMENDED READING

DUNEDIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

INVISIBLE FAMILIES

Terry Stewart

(Ask to see their catalogue of gay and lesbian titles, "The Word is Out")

FROM PFLAG SOUTH

BE YOURSELF– Questions and answers for Gay Lesbian and Bisexual Youth

HOW DO I TELL MY PARENTS?– A guide for people contemplating coming out to their parents and family

(PFLAG offers a support service and a wide selection of resources for parents and friends)

INTERNET RESOURCES

PFLAG SOUTH

<http://au.geocities.com/pflagsouth>

- A list of resources available from PFLAG
- Who we are and how to contact us
- News and stories of PFLAG members
- Useful sites in Dunedin and beyond

GAYLINE WELLINGTON

<http://www.gayline.gen.nz>

An excellent and comprehensive resource for gay New Zealanders

GETTING REAL

<http://www.gettingreal.asn.au>

An Australian site with a great selection of information for gay and lesbian youth.

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY

Being yourself

"What we must never forget is that we still are the same person, we haven't changed. There are gay people just like you and me out there everywhere. People may think that if you are gay, you are weird, but people never take a moment to look back and think of all the so called normal things you have done and are going to do even though you are gay. Being gay is normal. Not weird. Anyway, why be like everyone else when you can be yourself!"

Anonymous

Coming Out

"I was impatient with people. 'Accept me now or see you later.' I realise now, that it took me years to understand that I am gay and maybe I should give others time to adapt. Now everyone will be instantly overjoyed with the news and that's OK"

Anonymous

"I made sure that I had plenty of time to spend with the person I was telling so that I could talk and answer any questions"

20 years

Family

"I knew Mum would need someone to talk to so I told my aunt first because I knew she would be really cool about it and listen and support Mum"

19 years

"I did it and I've never looked back. I was lucky. I've made huge network of friends. I had their support and my family's too"

18 years

Getting Help

PFLAG South

Phone 025 6869 304

Email gouldint@es.co.nz

Mail PO Box 5266 Dunedin

Website <http://au.geocities.com/pflagsouth>

WHEN YOU
THINK YOU
MIGHT BE
BISEXUAL
OR
LESBIAN
OR
GAY



PFLAG South

**Parents, Families, and Friends
Of Lesbians and Gays**