



Frequently Asked Questions

What is homosexuality? It is the capacity to feel love and sexual satisfaction with someone of the same gender. Typically people think that is unnatural and not normal. This is not the case.

Is homosexuality prevalent? About 8-10% of men and women identify as gay or lesbian. Same-sex intimate behavior is common, having been found in every known culture. LGBTQ people are found in every social, economic, racial, and religious group. They are in every profession and every walk of life. They are our teachers, friends, colleagues, parents, and children. We all know a number of LGBTQ people, whether we are aware of it or not.

What causes homosexuality? The actual facts that determine sexual orientation are not known. Most researchers believe that one's basic sexual orientation is innate, not a choice, predisposed at birth, or established at a very early age. While these primary affectional inclinations may not be recognized for many years, once established, they tend not to change substantially. Some believe that it might be genetic, meaning that it is inherited.



When do gay men and lesbians first know? There is no set age at which a person becomes aware that he or she is lesbian or gay. Some LGBTQ people become aware of their sexual orientation during adolescence. Because of the strong sexual societal pressure to be heterosexual, however, some people do not

realize that a heterosexual lifestyle does not meet their needs or feelings until later in life.

Can you tell if people are gay or lesbian by their appearance? No. Lesbians and gay men are as varied in their dress, mannerisms, and styles as are heterosexuals. Despite this diversity, many stereotypes persist about the effeminate man or the masculine woman. Although some gay people adopt those styles, the overwhelming majority of lesbians and gay men do not conform to these stereotypes, and their sexual orientation is invisible to the general public.

Do lesbians and gay men hate the opposite sex? No. Lesbians are lesbians because they form loving relationships with women, and gay men are gay men because they form loving relationships with men, and neither forms these relationships because they hate the other gender. Many lesbians have close male friends and many gay men have close women friends.



Is homosexuality healthy? Studies have shown that people's sexual orientation has no bearing on their mental and emotional stability. In one landmark research project, mental health



professionals were unable to distinguish between homosexuals and heterosexuals in terms of functionality, stability, and creativity. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the official listing of psychiatric disorders.

Why do gay people need gay rights laws? Isn't that asking for special privileges? It's actually about "equal rights" not "special rights." Anti-gay extremists frequently characterize civil rights and equal protection under the law for LGBTQ Americans as "special rights" in an attempt to energize opposition to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws. In reality, LGBTQ people just want what everybody else has.

Won't gay parents make their kids gay? Research has shown that children of lesbian or gay parents are no more or less likely to become gay or lesbian. Most gays and lesbians had heterosexual parents. Of course children growing up in non-traditional families may face a certain amount of social prejudice, but such challenges can be empowering of children if they have love and support. Fewer and fewer children are growing up in two-parent, heterosexual, nuclear families. Lesbian and gay families are one of many diverse family types that exist

Do gay men and lesbian women have many more sexual partners than heterosexuals? Certainly, individuals within the LGBTQ community have as many sexual partners as do heterosexual individuals. Over 50% of LGBTQ individuals are in long-term relationships. Heterosexual and same-sex marriages both report a 50% divorce rate.

What is the "gay agenda"? It is not accurate to talk about the "gay agenda." Instead, talk about "gay rights" or "civil rights" or "human rights." The "lesbian and gay movement" accurately describes the historical effort to achieve understanding and equal treatment for gays and lesbians. Notions of a "homosexual agenda" are rhetorical inventions of anti-gay extremists seeking to portray the lesbian and gay civil rights movement as somehow evil and menacing.



Do LGBTQ people want to come into our schools and recruit the students to their lifestyle? Absolutely not. There have been attempts to bring LGBTQ issues into schools, but certainly not to convert anyone. There is no evidence that people could be "recruited" to a homosexual orientation,

even if someone wanted to do this. The intent is to teach adolescents not to mistreat LGBTQ classmates, who are often subjects of harassment and physical attacks. Talking openly about homosexuality is also crucial to students who are LGBTQ. Feeling alone, frightened and confused, these young people are much more likely to attempt suicide than their straight peers. A recent study indicates that 30% of gay and lesbian students attempt suicide around the age of 15.

Do homosexuals spread AIDS? No. AIDS is spread by the HIV virus. There are certain groups who have been disproportionately affected by AIDS, but anyone who practices unsafe sex or shared needles while using drugs, is putting themselves at risk.

There are people who are misinformed and blame AIDS on gay men, bisexual men, people of color, IV drug users, and people from Haiti. The gay community has



been an inspiration to many because of the courageous and powerful way it has responded to this human tragedy.

Do gay men molest children? This notion is a vicious lie. 97% of child molesting is perpetrated by heterosexual adult males on adolescent females. The "average" offender is a white heterosexual male in an adult relationship and is a man that the child knows. The adult who does molest children is often a pedophile—a person who is attracted to children regardless of their sex.

Can homosexuality be cured? Reparative or conversion therapy is not effective. No empirical scientific support exists for such procedures. And it can be harmful. Such notions imply that LGBTQ people are sick, abnormal and unnatural and, therefore, in need of curing. LGBTQ people do not need curing. They are not in need of repair. They do not need to be converted to a healthier or more moral state of being. It is contrary to scientific research to portray LGBTQ individuals as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation. Homosexuality is not a mental disorder in need of being changed.