



Resource Guide

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What is the Safe Space Initiative at Concordia College?

In 1996 the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America published a pastoral letter on homosexuality and the church. In the letter they urged Lutheran congregations to be “safe places for those who are persecuted or harassed in our society,”¹ and “to extend a caring welcome for gay and lesbian persons and their families.”² With this message in mind, a number of faculty and staff members at Concordia College joined together in 2003 to organize a Safe Space initiative in support of LGBTQ members of the campus community. This program was renewed in 2008 with the support of the college. It continues to provide a network of supportive allies for LGBTQ students.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Safe Space initiative is to make the Concordia College campus a safer and freer environment for all members of our community regardless of sexual orientation. Safe Space faculty and staff members pledge to be confidential, non-judgmental and supportive contacts for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) members of the Concordia College community. The Safe Space Program also strives to educate the campus community about the initiative.

What it Means to be a Safe Space Participant

- Be open to questions from and about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) people and their issues. Questions may come from students who identify as LGBT or are questioning their sexual orientation. Additionally, questions may come from heterosexual students who are concerned about the treatment of an LGBTQ person and may wish for more information about becoming an ally. Colleagues also may have questions.
- Support policies that make the Concordia College campus a “safe space” for LGBTQ students, staff and faculty.
- Encourage others to become a part of the Safe Space program. The more willing people are to talk about these issues with facts and openness, the safer our campus will become for LGBTQ people.

How to Participate in the Safe Space Initiative

- Attend a Safe Space workshop, which examines attitudes and beliefs, raises awareness, builds skills, and offers resources.
- After attending workshop, display the Safe Space sticker on your office door.
- Continue to engage in informal and facilitated discussion, join a Safe Space Lunch Series conversation or tri-college event or participate in SAGA-hosted events.

The Purpose of the Safe Space Sticker

- The sticker helps to convey a message that you are supportive, trustworthy and sensitive to the needs and concerns of LGBTQ people.
- The sticker indicates that, within your office or room, homophobic and heterosexist comments and actions will not be tolerated silently, but instead will be addressed in an educational, informative, confidential and non-threatening manner.
- The sticker does not indicate whether you are or are not LGBTQ, it merely states that you are a support and resource person (in other words, an ally).

¹ <http://archive.elca.org/synods/bishopswelcome.html>

² *ibid.*

Commitment

- The length of your commitment to Safe Space is your decision.
- As long as you want to participate, display your sticker on your door or within your office. If you decide to discontinue your participation, simply remove your sticker and inform the Safe Space Program Committee. There will be no questions asked. You may request to re-affiliate at any time.

Being an ally can be tough at times. Your genuine dedication to this program, no matter what its length, will create a positive space within our community.

Sections adapted from the University of Richmond Safe Zone Information Handbook, 2000.

Guidelines for Safe Space Members

1. Respect each individual's privacy. We are asking you to keep contacts confidential.
2. Keep in mind the Cass Model of Sexual Identity Development, (see section III b). Try to use language that reflects where the student is in his/her development. (Example: A student may be exploring his/her sexuality and may not identify self as gay, lesbian, or bisexual even though she/he is engaging in same-sex relationships.)
3. You may find yourself being an advocate, advisor, teacher, or mentor to students who seek your support. Feel free to have coffee or lunch with students who seek you out. We strictly prohibit the formation of romantic or sexual relationships between students and allies in the Safe Space Program. It is important to keep clear, professional boundaries.
4. Refer students for counseling when appropriate (see section I c). If a student is experiencing psychological distress and is having difficulty coping, suggest that counseling may be helpful to him or her. A good guideline for you to use: If you are feeling overwhelmed or worried about a student, referring them to the Counseling Center would be appropriate.
5. If your Safe Space sticker is defaced or torn down contact the Safe Space Committee for a new copy.
6. Please inform the Safe Space Committee if you are leaving the College, changing offices, or want to withdraw from the program.
7. Keep your resource manual in a location that is accessible and familiar to you. It is permissible to copy materials from the resource manual for individual students.
8. Please feel free to contact the Safe Space Committee with any questions or suggestions.

Adapted from

WMU Office of Student Life, *Safe on Campus Resource Manual* (Western Michigan University: Kalamazoo, MI) 2001

When to Refer a Student to a Mental Health Professional

Most of the students you will encounter will be seeking support, advice, or information. Occasionally, you may meet with a student who is experiencing a high level of psychological distress. This may be evident in the following ways.

1. A student states that he or she is no longer able to function in a normal capacity within their classes. There may have been a drop in grades or academic performance.
2. A student can no longer cope with daily activities and responsibilities. A student may no longer be going to classes, doing coursework, or keeping a job.
3. A student expresses depressive symptoms such as: sleep disturbance, sudden weight loss or weight gain, crying spells, fatigue, loss of interest or pleasure in previous enjoyable activities, and/or inability to concentrate or complete tasks.
4. A student expresses severe anxiety symptoms such as: feelings of panic, shortness of breath, headaches, sweaty palms, dry mouth, or racing thoughts.
5. A student expresses suicidal thoughts or feelings.
6. A student has no support. The person has no friends or any friends he/she can talk to about sexual orientation issues. This person may not need counseling, but could benefit from a support group and the Counseling Center can make that assessment and referral.
7. A good guideline to use if all else fails: If you are feeling overwhelmed or worried about a student, referring them to a mental health professional would probably be appropriate.

Adapted from

WMU Office of Student Life, *Safe on Campus Resource Manual* (Western Michigan University: Kalamazoo, MI) 2001

Bias-Related Violence, Intimidation and Harassment

Preamble

It is the goal of Concordia College as an academic and Christian community to maintain an environment free of violence, intimidation and harassment. Bias-related behavior based on race, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, national origin, physical appearance, disability or sexual orientation assaults the dignity and worth of the individual and will not be tolerated. Indeed, victimization will be actively opposed.

We expect that all members of this community will treat each other with dignity and respect, and that all members of the community will assume the responsibility of appropriately confronting acts of bias-related violence, intimidation and harassment which may occur. This policy statement identifies a non-exhaustive list of examples of behavior that are unacceptable and outlines the procedures for handling violations.

Definition

Bias-related violence, intimidation and harassment is defined as verbal, written or physical conduct which is based on race, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, national origin, physical appearance, disability or sexual orientation. In addition, such conduct inevitably has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic, co-curricular, social or work-related participation in the college community. Bias-related violence, intimidation and harassment exists, for example, when:

1. behavior is intended to intimidate, insult or stigmatize an individual or group;
2. use is made of provocative words or nonverbal symbols which, by virtue of their form, are commonly understood to convey direct and visceral hatred or contempt for human beings; or
3. an act of violence is committed in connection with a bias.

Nothing in this definition should be construed as an abrogation of freedom of expression as established in the [The Student Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities](#). However, protected freedom of expression ends when prohibited bias-related violence, intimidation or harassment begins.

Procedures

Persons experiencing bias-related violence, intimidation or harassment are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from one of the advisers especially selected and trained for the purpose of supporting them. Such persons include: counseling staff, a Student Affairs dean, designated faculty and staff advisers, hall directors and designated community volunteers. These advisers/counselors can provide a sympathetic listening ear, explain available options and assist the person throughout any formal or informal option pursued.

Informal Options

Informal options include:

1. When appropriate, bias-related intimidation or harassment can be properly confronted by the affected person(s) and by other members of the community.
2. If conflicts or problems arise in which the person experiencing bias-related harassment or intimidation does not wish to file a formal complaint, the person can request mediation services in an effort to informally resolve the matter. An individual or a panel of one student, one faculty member and one staff member can be named to mediate the matter.

Formal Options

Formal options include:

1. If informal resolutions fail or are inappropriate, formal complaints to college officials can be filed as follows:
 - A student complaint involving a faculty member shall be brought to the academic dean or assistant/associate dean.
 - A student complaint involving another student or a staff member shall be filed with the dean of students or an assistant/associate dean.
 - Student employees and support staff members shall submit complaints to the director of human resources or the vice president for business affairs.
 - Administrative staff members shall submit complaints to the director of human resources or the vice president for business affairs.
 - A faculty complaint shall be filed with the academic dean or an assistant/associate dean.
2. Bias-related violence should be reported immediately to college and to civil authorities.

Established disciplinary procedures for handling complaints against students or faculty or staff will be followed in cases involving bias-related violence, intimidation or harassment. The appropriate college official named above will explain those procedures to the complainant and keep him/her informed as to the status of those proceedings.

(This policy statement does not stand alone, for it also needs to be considered in relation to other college policies such as [The Student Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities](#) Document and other policy statements covering harassment and discrimination.)

Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality

What is sexual orientation?

Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction toward others. It is easily distinguished from other components of sexuality including biological sex, [gender identity](#) (the psychological sense of being male or female), and the social gender role (adherence to cultural norms for feminine and masculine behavior).

[Sexual orientation](#) exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality and includes various forms of bisexuality. Bisexual persons can experience sexual, emotional, and affectional attraction to both their own sex and the opposite sex. Persons with a homosexual orientation are sometimes referred to as gay (both men and women) or as lesbian (women only).

Sexual orientation is different from sexual behavior because it refers to feelings and self-concept. Individuals may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviors.

What causes a person to have a particular sexual orientation?

There are numerous theories about the origins of a person's sexual orientation. Most scientists today agree that sexual orientation is most likely the result of a complex interaction of environmental, cognitive and biological factors. In most people, sexual orientation is shaped at an early age. There is also considerable recent evidence to suggest that biology, including genetic or inborn hormonal factors, play a significant role in a person's sexuality.

It's important to recognize that there are probably many reasons for a person's sexual orientation, and the reasons may be different for different people.

Is sexual orientation a choice?

No, human beings cannot choose to be either gay or straight. For most people, sexual orientation emerges in early adolescence without any prior sexual experience. Although we can choose whether to act on our feelings, psychologists do not consider sexual orientation to be a conscious choice that can be voluntarily changed.

Can therapy change sexual orientation?

No; even though most homosexuals live successful, happy lives, some homosexual or bisexual people may seek to change their sexual orientation through therapy, often coerced by family members or religious groups to try and do so. The reality is that homosexuality is not an illness. It does not require treatment and is not changeable. However, not all gay, lesbian, and bisexual people who seek assistance from a mental health professional want to change their sexual orientation. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual people may seek psychological help with the coming out process or for strategies to deal with prejudice, but most go into therapy for the same reasons and life issues that bring straight people to mental health professionals.

What about so-called "conversion therapies"?

Some therapists who undertake so-called conversion therapy report that they have been able to change their clients' sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual. [Close scrutiny of these reports](#), however show several factors that cast doubt on their claims. For example, many of these claims come from organizations with an ideological perspective that condemns homosexuality. Furthermore, their claims are poorly documented; for example, treatment outcome is not followed and reported over time, as would be the standard to test the validity of any mental health intervention.

The American Psychological Association is concerned about such therapies and their potential harm to patients. In 1997, the Association's Council of Representatives passed a resolution reaffirming [psychology's opposition to homophobia](#) in treatment and spelling out a client's right to unbiased treatment and self-determination. Any person who enters into therapy to deal with issues of sexual orientation has a right to expect that such therapy will take place in a professionally neutral environment, without any social bias.

Is homosexuality a mental illness or emotional problem?

No. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health professionals agree that [homosexuality is not an illness](#), a mental disorder, or an emotional problem. More than 35 years of objective, well-designed scientific research has shown that homosexuality, in and of itself, is not associated with mental disorders or emotional or social problems. Homosexuality was once thought to be a mental illness because mental health professionals and society had biased information.

In the past, the studies of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people involved only those in therapy, thus biasing the resulting conclusions. When researchers examined data about such people who were not in therapy, the idea that homosexuality was a mental illness was quickly found to be untrue.

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association confirmed the importance of the new, better-designed research and removed homosexuality from the official manual that lists mental and emotional disorders. Two years later, the American Psychological Association passed a resolution supporting this removal.

For more than 25 years, both associations have urged all mental health professionals to help dispel the stigma of mental illness that some people still associate with homosexual orientation.

Can lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals be good parents?

Yes. Studies comparing groups of [children raised by homosexual and by heterosexual parents](#) find no developmental differences between the two groups of children in four critical areas: their intelligence, psychological adjustment, social adjustment, and popularity with friends. It is also important to realize that a parent's sexual orientation does not indicate their children's.

Another myth about homosexuality is the mistaken belief that gay men have more of a tendency than heterosexual men to sexually molest children. There is no evidence to suggest that homosexuals or bisexuals molest children at a higher rate than heterosexuals.

Why do some gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals tell people about their sexual orientation?

Because sharing that aspect of themselves with others is important to their mental health. In fact, the process of identity development for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals called "coming out" has been found to be strongly related to psychological adjustment; the more positive the gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity, the better one's mental health and the higher one's self-esteem.

Why is the "coming out" process difficult for some gay, lesbian and bisexual people?

For some gay and bisexual people the "coming out" process is difficult; for others it is not. Often lesbian, gay and bisexual people feel afraid, different, and alone when they first realize that their sexual orientation is different from the community norm. This is particularly true for people becoming aware of their gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation in childhood or adolescence, which is not uncommon. And depending on their families and their communities, they may have to struggle against prejudice and misinformation about homosexuality.

Children and adolescents may be particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of bias and stereotypes. They may also fear being rejected by family, friends, co-workers, and religious institutions. Some gay people have to worry about losing their jobs or being harassed at school if their sexual orientation became well known.

Unfortunately, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are at a higher risk for physical assault and violence than are heterosexuals. Studies done in California in the mid-1990s showed that nearly one-fifth of all lesbians who took part in the study, and more than one-fourth of all gay men who participated, had been the victim of a hate crime based on their sexual orientation. In another California study of approximately 500 young adults, half of all the young men participating in the study admitted to some form of anti-gay aggression, ranging from name-calling to physical violence.

What can be done to overcome the prejudice and discrimination that gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals experience?

Research has found that the people who have the most positive attitudes toward gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals are those who say they know one or more gay, lesbian or bisexual person well, often as a friend or co-worker. For this reason, psychologists believe that negative attitudes toward gay people as a group are prejudices that are not grounded in actual experience but are based on stereotypes and misinformation. Furthermore, protection against violence and discrimination are very important, just as they are for any other minority groups. Some states include violence against an individual on the basis of his or her sexual orientation as a "hate crime," and ten U.S. states have laws against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Why is it important for society to be better educated about homosexuality?

Educating all people about sexual orientation and homosexuality is likely to diminish anti-gay prejudice. [Accurate information about homosexuality](#) is especially important to young people who are first discovering and seeking to understand their sexuality, whether homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. Fears that access to such information will make more people gay have no validity; information about homosexuality does not make someone gay or straight.

Are all gay and bisexual men HIV infected?

No. This is a common myth. In reality, the risk of exposure to HIV is related to a person's behavior, not their sexual orientation. What's important to remember about HIV/AIDS is that contracting the disease can be prevented by using safe sex practices and by not using drugs.

Documents from [APA Help Center](#) may be reprinted in their entirety with credit given to the American Psychological Association. Any exceptions to this, including requests to excerpt or paraphrase documents from [APA Help Center](#), must be presented in writing to [Help Center](#) and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Permission for exceptions will be given on a one-time-only basis and must be sought for each additional use of the document.

The Cass Model of GLB Identity Development

One theory of the stages of coming out is a six-step model developed by Vivienne Cass and called the Cass Model.

STAGE 1: Identity Confusion

The individual is perceived as belonging to the mainstream (i.e. heterosexual) culture by both him- and herself and by society. They, themselves, are in denial about their sexual orientation although they know that there is something 'different' about them. It is a stage of not knowing about gay culture. Often, the individual moves to stage two through exposure to other gays and lesbians or to information about gay and lesbian culture.

STAGE 2: Identity Comparison

Entry into this stage occurs when the walls of denial finally break. The individual begins to question who they are in light of this new label, which they often attempt to reject. This is a quite confusing time where the individual has to rediscover how they fit into their society. Things often taken for granted like religion, friends, family, or occupation must be renegotiated in light of this newly emerging identity.

STAGE 3: Identity Tolerance

The individual may start to come out occasionally; often this is negotiated with an increasing contact with the gay community. Although see themselves as homosexual, they still present themselves to the world-at-large as heterosexual, this may include still being involved in a heterosexual marriage or dating situation.

STAGE 4: Identity Acceptance

This stage involves an immersion into the gay community. The individual may react to years of having to hide him or herself by taking their identity to an extreme in the other direction. Flamboyant behavior, a loud declaration of sexuality and a denigration of all that is heterosexual are all common at this stage. Behind it is an intense anger at the heterosexual world coupled with a burgeoning sense of pride about who they are.

STAGE 5: Identity Pride

The birth of the activist happens here. The growing pride and anger of stage four begin to become more focused at this stage. Negative responses are expected from heterosexuals and the individual tries to actively work against these responses.

STAGE 6: Identity Synthesis

Integration of sexuality into all aspects of the individuals being occurs here. Emotional, mental, spiritual, and sexual self-expression all creates a unified self. The individual is out of the closet. And although anger still exists, it is no longer directed at all heterosexuals; rather it is situational and focused.

From Moore, J and Parker, L (1999), GLB Identity Development. In *Safe Space Resource Packet* (University of the Sciences in Philadelphia LGB Center, Philadelphia)

Cycle of Oppression

1. **Stereotype:** a positive or negative oversimplification or generalization about an entire group of people without considering individual differences.
 - The **stereotypes** we hold form the basis of our **prejudices**.



2. **Prejudice:** a conscious or unconscious negative belief regarding entire groups of people as well as the individual members of a group.
- **Prejudice** leads to **discrimination** when a prejudiced person is in power can withhold memberships, opportunities, and resources.



3. **Discrimination:** occurs when prejudice is accompanied by power. Discrimination can take many forms including racism and sexism.
- Acts of **discrimination** often build in severity over time until the relatively less powerful social group is placed in a state of **oppression** by the more powerful social group.



4. **Oppression:** the systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group of people with access to social power. The result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.
- Because **oppression** is institutionalized in our society, target group members often believe the messages and **internalize the oppression**.



5. **Internalized Oppression:** accepting and living by the social beliefs and practices of the stronger social group. This occurs when the less powerful social group believes the stereotypes they receive and begins to conform to the stereotypes.
- As a result, the less powerful social group reinforces stereotypes and perpetuates the cycle of oppression.

Edited from materials developed by Sheri Lyn Schmidt and Ohio University's Safe Zone Workshop

Being an Ally

What is an Ally?

An Ally is a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group [in this case someone who is straight] who works to end oppression by supporting and advocating for the oppressed population [in this case LGBTQ persons].

Allies to racial, ethnic and religious minorities and women have been remarkably effective in promoting positive change in the dominant culture. Only recently has their instrumental position been extended to sexual orientation and gender identity. The past few years have witnessed the development of heterosexual Ally organizations which have

helped to make the culture of campuses or workplaces more accepting of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning persons.

The University of Akron (<http://www.uakron.edu/groups/lgbtu/allies.php>)

An Ally is a heterosexual person whose behavior and attitude are anti-heterosexist in perspective, and who works toward combating homophobia and heterosexism on both a personal and an institutional level.

Evans, NJ & Wall, VA (1991). Beyond Tolerance: Gay, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus. ACPA

A straight ally is someone who is not lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning but personally advocates for LGBTQ equal rights and fair treatment. Straight allies are some of the most effective and powerful advocates for the LGBTQ movement. These allies have proven invaluable personally and politically, and are increasingly important in the fight for LGBTQ equality. Indeed, their voices often have been heard while those of LGBTQ people have been ignored.

The Human Rights Campaign (http://www.hrc.org/issues/coming_out/straight_supporters.asp)

The Qualities of an Ally

- Works to understand the needs of the LGBTQ community.
- Acknowledges how patterns of oppression have operated in her/his life.
- Is committed to personal, institutional, and societal justice and equality.
- Promotes a sense of community which respects and includes the LGBTQ community.
- Refuses to ignore or accept discrimination, homophobia, and ignorance.

Things That Discourage People From Becoming Allies

- Being labeled a gay, lesbian, or bisexual by the heterosexual population ("by association"). The label is not negative in itself, but can cause difficulties for the heterosexual when looking for a significant other.
- Allies may become victim of overt or subtle discrimination such as not getting appointed to a committee or a negative reflection on an evaluation,
- Learning the culture and language may be difficult if not impossible without the assistance of a member of the oppressed group.
- Allies are often mocked and ridiculed by heterosexuals that view the issue as unimportant and unpopular.

- Allies may be alienated by friends and colleagues that are not comfortable with the topic. These people may noticeably distance themselves from the ally in order to avoid conflict or labels.
- Due to some past experiences with heterosexuals, the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender population may question an ally's motivation.

Benefits of Being an Ally

- You may be the reason an individual finally decides that his or her life is worth something.
- You open yourself up to the possibility of close relationships with an additional 10% of the world.
- You may become less likely to stereotype according to sex roles.
- You have opportunities to learn from, teach, and have an impact on a population with whom you might not otherwise interact.

Ally Self-Assessment

- You need to know where you are before helping others. Think of your responses in regards to the program in which you are involved. Be honest with yourself and answer whether you agree or disagree.
- I have had experiences with lesbians, gays and/or bisexuals.
- I'm not really homophobic -- it's just the way I was raised.
- I tell or laugh at jokes on gays and lesbians.
- I have at least one "good friend" who is lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- I have witnessed homophobic behaviors within my place of employment.
- I have witnessed oppression of homosexuals within my community.
- I have addressed homophobic or oppressive behaviors in my environment.
- I have an obligation as a human being to address incidences of oppression.
- I could support a gay, lesbian or bisexual co-worker on my staff or in my department.
- I feel comfortable discussing issues of sexual orientation with others.
- I would be comfortable enough to live with a person that I know is gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

From Huelsbeck quoted in *Safe Space Resource Packet* (University of the Sciences in Philadelphia LGB Center, Philadelphia) 1999.

Ally Development

The Four Basic Levels of Becoming an Ally

1. **Awareness:** Explore how you are different from and similar to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people. Gain this awareness through talking with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people, attending workshops and self-examination.
2. **Knowledge/Education:** Begin to understand policies, laws and practices and how they affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people. Educate yourself on the many communities and cultures of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people.
3. **Skills:** This is an area which is difficult for many people. You must learn to take your awareness and knowledge and communicate it to others. You can acquire these skills by attending workshops, role-playing with friends or peers, and developing support connections.
4. **Action:** This is the most important and frightening step. Despite the fear, action is the only way to effect change in the society as a whole.

Adapted from

Evans, N.J. and Wall, V.A. eds. *Beyond tolerance : gays, lesbians, and bisexuals on campus* (American College Personnel Association: Alexandria, VA) 1991

Ten Ways to be an Ally and a Friend

1. Be a listener.
2. Be open-minded.
3. Be willing to talk.
4. Be inclusive and invite LGBTQ friends to hang out with your friends and family.
5. Don't assume that all your friends and co-workers are straight. Someone close to you could be looking for support in their coming-out process. Not making assumptions will give them the space they need.
6. Homophobic comments and jokes are harmful. Let your friends, family and co-workers know that you find them offensive.
7. Confront your own prejudices and homophobia, even if it is uncomfortable to do so.
8. Defend your LGBTQ friends against discrimination.
9. Believe that all people, regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation, should be treated with dignity and respect.
10. If you see LGBTQ people misrepresented in the media, contact a resource like GLAAD

Taken from GLAAD.org

Five Other Points to Keep in Mind

1. Have a good understanding of sexual orientation and be comfortable with your own.
2. Be aware of the coming-out process and realize that it is not a one-time event. The coming-out process is unique to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people and brings challenges that are not often understood.
3. Understand that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people receive the same message about homosexuality and bisexuality as everyone else. Thus lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people suffer from internalized homophobia and heterosexism. It is important to recognize the risks of coming out and to challenge the internal oppression.
4. Remember that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning people are a diverse group. Each community within the larger lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning community has unique needs and goals.
5. Know at least basic information about AIDS/HIV in order to address myths and misinformation and to be supportive of those affected by this disease whether in themselves or in partners and friends. While AIDS/HIV is a health issue for all, those who live with the most fear and have lost the most members of their community are gay, lesbian and bisexual persons.

Adapted from

Evans, N.J. and Wall, V.A. eds. *Beyond tolerance : gays, lesbians, and bisexuals on campus* (American College Personnel Association: Alexandria, VA) 1991

Recent Advancements Which Could Not Have Happened Without Allies

- “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” could not have been repealed without the support of many allies. Thanks to allies, LGBTQ individuals can now serve their country openly and honestly, being held to the same standards of conduct and protected by the same policies that govern their straight colleagues.
- Hospital visitation. Until the recent healthcare reform, even when same-sex partners had durable power of attorney, not all hospitals allowed them to make the decisions their partners had explicitly given them the ability to make. Hospitals now must honor whatever visitation and decision-making desires the patient sets forth.
- Marriage rights for same-sex couples in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, Vermont and the District of Columbia could not have passed without the constituent support of allies. LGBTQ individuals are now able to protect their loved ones legally (see IV f for rights that marriage allows LGBTQ individuals).
- Gay-Straight Alliances in schools and on college campuses have helped many LGBTQ teens and young adults to handle difficult periods and transitions in their lives.
- The media no longer shy away from including complex LGBTQ characters and themes, helping both gay and straight people see beyond stereotypes and begin to have a model for the incorporation of sexual minorities into a heterosexist culture.

Techniques and Approaches for Confronting Homophobia

1. Identify the other person's homophobia as the issue.
2. Point out the harm that can be done to innocent people by unquestioned prejudices and discriminatory acts.
3. Give specific examples of the other person's homophobic remarks or actions so that they cannot deny the connection between their behavior and what you are identifying as discrimination.
4. Challenge the other person to take personal responsibility for his or her discriminatory attitudes or acts.
5. Identify the social danger of bigotry, mainly the inability to understand and integrate with people who are different from them, but with whom they must share the planet.
6. Counter distorted and derogatory myths about gay and lesbians with the truth.
7. Establish that people making homophobic remarks cannot take it for granted that anyone listening will agree with them.
8. Clarify that being gay is not a choice; it is established early in the life cycle and is the natural and normal way for some people to be. It is not a sickness or anything to recover from.
9. Provide a perspective on how devastating it is for the mental health of LGBTQ individuals to be silent and invisible, and how it is necessary to challenge homophobia.
10. Correct the notion that more people are "turning gay" and explain that more LGBTQ individuals are leading open lives.
11. Challenge statements which define gays and lesbians identities exclusively in terms of sex.
12. Confront assumptions which group homosexuality with sadism, pedophilia, and/or bestiality.
13. Provide accurate, objective information about AIDS—what it is and what it isn't.
14. Point out that a gay person making homophobic remarks is reflecting their own internalized homophobia.
15. Shift the focus from how acceptable homosexuality should be to how unacceptable bigotry and discrimination are.
16. Be an advocate for those people who cannot (or will not) speak for themselves

How Homophobia Hurts Everyone

It cannot be denied that homophobia, like other forms of oppression, serves the dominant group by establishing and maintaining power and mastery over those who are marginalized or disenfranchised. Individuals maintain oppressive behaviors to gain certain rewards or to avoid punishment, to protect their self-esteem against psychological doubts or conflicts, to enhance their value systems, or to categorize others in an attempt to comprehend a complex world. By excluding entire groups of people, those in positions of power obtain economic, political, ideological, and other privileges. This book takes the position, also, that oppression ultimately limits members of the dominant group, in a number of ways:

- ◆ Homophobia locks all people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression. Through the process of socialization, people are expected to adhere to fairly strict social roles based on their sex.
- ◆ Homophobic conditioning compromises the integrity of heterosexual people by pressuring them to treat others badly, actions contrary to their basic humanity. Frederick Douglas, fugitive slave and abolitionist, described what he called “the dehumanizing effects” of slavery, not on slaves alone, but also on white people whose position on slavery corrupted their humanity.
- ◆ Homophobia inhibits one’s ability to form close, intimate relationships with members of one’s own sex. Young people often form close same-sex attachments during childhood. However, once they reach a certain age (usually around puberty), their elders encourage them to distance themselves from these friends, with the implication that, if they do not, their sexuality will be called into question.
- ◆ Homophobia generally restricts communication with a significant portion of the population and, more specifically, limits family relationships. Children, fearing negative reactions from parents, hold back important information about their lives. Parents, often not wanting to hear about their child’s sexual or gender identity, never truly get to know their children.
- ◆ Homophobia is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chances of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Young people, of all sexual identities, are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are “normal.”
- ◆ Homophobia combined with sexphobia (fear and repulsion of sex) results in the elimination of any discussion of the lifestyles and sexuality of sexual minorities as part of school-based sex education, keeping vital information from all students. Such a lack of information can kill people in the age of AIDS.
- ◆ Homophobia can be used to stigmatize, silence, and, on occasion, target people who are perceived or defined by others as gay, lesbian, or bisexual but who are actually heterosexual.
- ◆ Homophobia prevents heterosexuals from accepting the benefits and gifts offered by sexual minorities: theoretical insights, social and spiritual visions and options, contributions in the arts and culture, to religion, to family life, indeed to all facets of society.
- ◆ Homophobia inhibits a unified and effective governmental and societal response to AIDS. Because of a wide-scale lack of early attention, the spread of AIDS reached epidemic proportions.
- ◆ Homophobia inhibits the appreciation of other types of diversity, making it unsafe for everyone because each person has unique traits not considered mainstream or dominant. Therefore, we are all diminished when any one of us is demeaned.

Homophobia diverts energy from more constructive endeavors. Amanda Udis-Kessler makes the argument that, with all the problems that plague the planet and diminish the quality of life for its inhabitants, homophobia keeps us from

looking at important social problems by directing attention away from the true causes of these problems and toward scapegoats.

Excerpted from

Blumenfeld, W. J. *Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price* (Beacon Press: Boston) 1992

Negative Homophobic Levels of Attitude

Repulsion

Homosexuality is seen as a crime against nature. Gays are sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc., and anything is justified to change them (e.g., prison, hospitalization, and negative behavior therapy, including electric shock).

Pity

Pity is heterosexual chauvinism. Heterosexuality is more mature and certainly to be preferred. Any possibility of becoming straight should be reinforced and those who seem to be born that way should be pitied, "the poor dears."

Tolerance

Homosexuality is just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and most people grow out of. Thus, gays are less mature than straights and should be treated with the protectiveness and indulgence one uses with a child. Gays and lesbians should not be given positions of authority (because they are still working through adolescent behaviors).

Acceptance

Acceptance still implies there is something to accept, characterized by such statements as, "You're not gay to me, you're a person," "What you do in bed is your own business," "That's fine as long as you don't flaunt it." This level denies social and legal realities. 84% of people believe being gay is obscene and vulgar, and 70% still believe it is wrong, even between consenting adults. Acceptance ignores the pain of invisibility and stress of "closeted" behavior. "Flaunt" usually means say or do anything that makes people aware.

Positive Levels of Attitudes

Support

The basic "liberal" approach. Work to safeguard the rights of gays and lesbians. Such people may be uncomfortable themselves, but are aware of the climate and the irrational unfairness.

Admiration

This attitude acknowledges that being gay or lesbian in our society takes strength. Such people are willing to truly look at themselves and work on their own homophobic attitudes.

Appreciation

Individuals at this level value the diversity of people and see gays and lesbians as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia in themselves and others.

Nurturance

Individuals at this level assume that gay and lesbian people are indispensable in our society. They view gays and lesbians with genuine affection and delight and are willing to be gay advocates.

Adapted from Dr. Dorothy Riddle in NDSU Safe Zone packet (2010)

Heterosexual Privilege Checklist

On a daily basis as a heterosexual person...

1. I can be pretty sure that my roommates, hallmates and classmates will be comfortable with my sexual orientation.
2. If I pick up a magazine, watch TV, or play music, I can be certain my sexual orientation will be represented.
3. When I talk about my heterosexuality (such as in a joke or talking about my relationships), I will not be accused of pushing my sexual orientation onto others.
4. I do not have to fear that if my family or friends find out about my sexual orientation there will be economic, emotional, physical or psychological consequences.
5. I did not grow up with games that attack my sexual orientation (i.e., fag tag or smear the queer).
6. I am not accused of being abused, warped or psychologically confused because of my sexual orientation.
7. I can go home from most meetings, classes, and conversations without feeling excluded, fearful, attacked, isolated, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, stereotyped or feared because of my sexual orientation.
8. I am never asked to speak for everyone who is heterosexual.
9. I can be sure that my classes will require curricular materials that testify to the existence of people with my sexual orientation.
10. People don't ask why I made my choice of sexual orientation.
11. People don't ask why I made my choice to be public about my sexual orientation.
12. I do not have to fear revealing my sexual orientation to friends or family. It's assumed.
13. My sexual orientation was never associated with a closet.
14. People of my gender do not try to convince me to change my sexual orientation.
15. I don't have to defend my heterosexuality.
16. I can easily find a religious community that will not exclude me for being heterosexual.
17. I can count on finding a therapist or doctor willing and able to talk about my sexuality.
18. I am guaranteed to find sex education literature for couples with my sexual orientation.
19. Because of my sexual orientation, I do not need to worry that people will harass me.
20. I have no need to qualify my straight identity.
21. My masculinity/femininity is not challenged because of my sexual orientation.
22. I am not identified by my sexual orientation.
23. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my sexual orientation will not work against me.
24. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has sexual orientation overtones.
25. Whether I rent or I go to a movie theater, I can be sure I will not have trouble finding my sexual orientation represented.
26. I am guaranteed to find people of my sexual orientation represented in the MIT curriculum, faculty, and administration.
27. I can walk in public with my significant other and not have people double-take or stare.
28. I can choose to not think politically about my sexual orientation.
29. I do not have to worry about telling my roommate about my sexuality. It is assumed I am a heterosexual.
30. I can remain oblivious of the language and culture of LGBT folk without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
31. I can go for months without being called straight.
32. I'm not grouped because of my sexual orientation.

33. My individual behavior does not reflect on people who identify as heterosexual.
34. In everyday conversation, the language my friends and I use generally assumes my sexual orientation. For example, sex inappropriately is referring to only heterosexual sex or family meaning heterosexual relationships with kids.
35. People do not assume I am experienced in sex or that I even have it merely because of my sexual orientation.
36. I can kiss a person of the opposite gender without being watched and stared at.
37. Nobody calls me straight with maliciousness.
38. People can use terms that describe my sexual orientation and mean positive things (i.e., "straight as an arrow", "standing up straight" or "straightened out") instead of demeaning terms (i.e., "that's gay" or being "queer").
39. I am not asked to think about why I am straight.
40. I can be open about my sexual orientation without worrying about my job.

This list is based on Peggy McIntosh's article on white privilege. These dynamics are but a few examples of the privilege which heterosexual people have. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer-identified folk have a range of different experiences, but cannot count on most of these conditions in their lives.

Retrieved from http://sap.mit.edu/content/pdf/heterosexual_privilege.pdf

Heterosexual Questionnaire

Take a few moments to read through these questions. If you are heterosexual, think about how you would feel if confronted with these questions. If you are LGBTQ, reflect on your thoughts or experiences with these questions.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?

4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, is it possible that all you need is a good gay lover?
6. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
7. Why do you heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into your lifestyle?
8. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep quiet?
9. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they'd face?
10. The majority of child molesters are heterosexual. Do you consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?
11. With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is still spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
12. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
13. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone was heterosexual like you?
14. Could you trust a heterosexual therapist to be objective? Don't you fear s/he might be inclined to influence you in the direction of her/his leanings?
15. How can you become a whole person if you limit yourself to compulsive, exclusive heterosexuality, and fail to develop your natural, healthy homosexual potential?
16. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed which might enable you to change if you really want to. Have you considered aversion therapy?

For many heterosexual people, homosexuality may be difficult to understand. Well-meaning heterosexuals may ask homosexual people questions to try to understand more about the differences between themselves and those who are LGBTQ.

By Martin Roshlin, Ph.D, quoted in the NDSU Safe Zone packet (2010)

Resources

Campus

Admissions
Concordia SAGA (Straight and Gay Alliance)
Counseling Center
Kjos Health Center
Office of Intercultural Affairs
Office of Ministry
Public Safety
Residence Life
Student Affairs

Fargo-Moorhead

Minnkota Center

Minnkota Center is a non-profit, community-based organization providing safe and affordable counseling services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning individuals. Sliding fee scale. No one is turned away.

810 4th Avenue South, Suite 202

Moorhead, MN 56560

(218) 287-4636 or (877) 871-4636

E-mail: minnkota@mhpmc.org

Minnkota Health Project

Minnkota Health Project (MHP) provides a coordinated set of services to people living with HIV/AIDS, their partners, and families in western Minnesota and east-central North Dakota. Services include a monthly food distribution, individual counseling, and support groups. Counseling and support groups are available to those living with HIV/AIDS, their partners, and families. Services also include the Transportation Assistance Fund, Emergency Assistance Fund, and the Quality of Life Fund.

810 4th Ave S., Ste 202

Moorhead, MN 56560

(218) 287-4636 or (877) 871-4636

E-mail: minnkota@mhpmc.org

NDSU/MSUM Safe Zone

North Dakota State University and Minnesota State University at Moorhead

<http://www.ndsu.edu/safezone/> (NDSU)

<http://www.mnstate.edu/safezone/> (MSUM)

Parents, Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) of Moorhead/Fargo

Promotes the health and well-being of GLBT persons and their families/friends through support, education, and advocacy.

<http://www.fmpflag.org/>

Email: fmpflag@fmpflag.org

Pride Collective and Community Center

The mission of the Pride Collective is "to create a sense of community and promote education and social activities aimed at furthering the social, emotional, and physical well-being and development of the GLBT community in the Red River Valley."

1105 1st Avenue South

Fargo, ND 58103

(218) 287-8034

<http://www.pridecollective.com/>

E-mail: info@pridecollective.com

Faith Lutheran Church

A welcoming congregation of the ELCA.

127 2nd Ave. E., West Fargo

(701) 282-3309

First Congregational United Church of Christ

A welcoming congregation of the UCC.

406 8th St. S., Moorhead

(218) 236-1756

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

A reconciling-in-Christ congregation of the ELCA.

670 4th Ave. N., Fargo
(701) 235-5591

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
120 21st Ave N., Fargo
(701) 232.2076

Unitarian Universality Church of Fargo-Moorhead
121 9th St S., Fargo
(701) 235-0394

Minnesota and North Dakota

Equality North Dakota

A statewide organization advocating for equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender North Dakotans.
Phone: (701) 235-7481.

<http://www.pridecollective.com/end.html>

GLSEN – Red River Valley

The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

(701) 777-3738

<http://chapters.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/redrivervalley/home.html>

Minnesota GLBT Education Fund

The link above takes you to a listing of scholarship programs in the United States and Canada specifically for GLBT students.

<http://www.scc.net/~t-bonham/EDLINKS.HTM>

North Dakota Human Rights Coalition

The mission of this coalition of organizations and individuals in North Dakota is "to affect change so that all people in North Dakota enjoy full human rights." Among its specific goals is the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected class in the North Dakota Human Rights Act.

<http://www.ndhrc.org/>

OutFront Minnesota

OutFront Minnesota provides a wide variety of services to the GLBT community of Minnesota and surrounding areas. Its website maintains a large list of GLBT organizations in Minnesota.

Phone: 1-800-800-0350

<http://www.outfront.org/>

Prairie OASOS (Prairie Open and Affirming Sexual Orientation Support)

Website provides a listing of GLBTQ resources in MN and ND.

<http://prairieoasos.yolasite.com>

National

Campus Pride

Campus Pride is a national online community and resource network committed to student leaders and campus organizations who work to create a safer campus environment free of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism and genderism at colleges and universities.

www.campuspride.org

Gay and Lesbian Advocates & Defenders

GLAD is dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity and expression

www.glad.org

GLBT National Help Center

Providing free and confidential telephone and email peer-counseling, information and local resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning callers throughout the United States.

1-888-843-4564

www.glbtnationalhelpcenter.org

GLBT National Youth Talkline

The GLBT National Youth Talkline provides free and confidential telephone and email peer-counseling, as well as factual information and local resources for cities and towns across the United States. Telephone volunteers are in their teens and early twenties, and they speak with teens and young adults up to age 25 about coming-out issues, relationship concerns, parent issues, school problems, HIV/AIDS anxiety and safer-sex information, and lots more!

1-800-246-PRIDE

www.youthtalkline.org

National Consortium of Directors of Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Resources in Higher Education

<http://www.lgbtcampus.org>

The National Gay & Lesbian College Fund

Provides lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students "a national resource of financial support, information and empowerment for those seeking to continue their education."

www.gayfund.org

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

An organization that works to eliminate prejudice, violence and injustice against LGBT people through politics on a local, state, and national level

www.thetaskforce.org

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

National organization for parents, friends and families of lesbians and gays. Web site provides an extensive selection of resources both for parents and for those who are exploring their sexual orientation.

www.pflag.org

Stay connected at www.cord.edu/safespace



SAFE SPACE CONTRACT AND CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The Safe Space initiative at Concordia College seeks to provide a network of faculty and staff committed and trained to provide safe, non-judgmental, and supportive contacts for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning members of the Concordia College community.

Responsibilities

As a member of Safe Space, I recognize my responsibilities to:

- promote an atmosphere of confidentiality and inform the person coming into my office of the limitations to that confidentiality.
- not attempt to sway the person to a different sexual orientation or viewpoint.
- be a contact person and positive listener to all who request my services as a member of the Safe Space Program.
- provide reference materials and other resources about sexual and gender identity and support services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning people (LGBTQ) in the area.
- provide support to any person who is dealing with homophobia so she/he will not feel alone.
- provide support and information to people who are having difficulty understanding or dealing with the sexual orientation of others (e.g., roommate, sibling, friend, etc.).
- offer support and referral to legal assistance for anyone who has been harassed because of her/his sexual orientation, including but not limited to an appropriate campus office or program.
- provide assistance for the community member whenever necessary; to help a person bring her/his case to the Counseling Center and/or Kjos Health Center and to other advocates, legal or otherwise, in a confidential way, if so requested by a student, staff member, or faculty member.

Rights

I recognize that I have rights as a member of Safe Space. They are:

- I can, at any time, refer the person seeking assistance to the Counseling Center and/or Kjos Health Center if I do not feel comfortable with a particular situation.
- I can, at any time, call upon other Safe Space Program members to answer questions or receive support.
- I can, at any time, call upon any other resources I find helpful that are consistent with the mission and purposes of the Safe Space Program.
- If necessary, I can, at any time, remove my office/room from the program, without any fear of embarrassment or harassment. At such time I will notify the Safe Space Committee of my choice.

Signature

By signing this form I hereby formally declare my office/room to be a Safe Space at Concordia College, that I agree with my rights and responsibilities as a Safe Space Member, and that I agree to support each student, staff, or faculty person in her/his perceived sexual orientation and/or need for related support, information, or referral.

Name_____ Department or Organization_____
Email Address _____ Office Phone #_____

Signature_____ Date_____

The Safe Space committee plans to list staff and faculty training participants as Safe Space members on its website. We hope this roster will signal a strong, campus wide investment in Safe Space, and help identify individual and departmental Safe Space members to prospective and current students. If you'd prefer not to be listed, please indicate that here: *I prefer to not be listed.* ☐