



# my friend is gay...

a peer group support resource

This booklet was produced by the Pride & Diversity Project with funds provided by the Monash School Focused Youth Service.

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**Pride & Diversity Reference Group**

**School Focused Youth Service Reference Group**



CITY OF  
MONASH



# About Monash Youth & Family Services



MYFS is a team with a vision, committed to enhancing the quality of people's lives and applying the principles of care, responsiveness, continuity and sensitivity.

MYFS aims to develop and implement programs that encourage individuals and families to reach their full potential and increase their physical, social, intellectual and emotional well-being.

The MYFS team is visionary, progressive and committed towards social justice, equality and empowering families and young people to make informed decisions about their own lives. The team is passionate about professional work practices and ethical standards.

## Monash Youth & Family Services is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

14 Bogong Avenue, Glen Waverley, Vic 3150

Telephone 9561 7359, Facsimile 9562 1955, Email [yrccr@monash.vic.gov.au](mailto:yrccr@monash.vic.gov.au)

Contact Monash Youth & Family Services for more information regarding:

- Youth Services
- ACTIVATE
- Rave Page
- Monash Youth Council
- School based programs
- Young Mum's Group
- Drug & Alcohol Project
- School holiday programs
- School Focused Youth Service
- Pride & Diversity Outreach Project
- Family Counselling
- Family Violence Program

# About Pride & Diversity



The Pride & Diversity Project was initially funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. The City of Monash continues to fund this project that provides a service to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people in the City of Monash. Pride & Diversity focuses on enhancing the quality of life for same-sex-attracted and transgender young people.

The Project provides a co-ordinated and responsive service for same sex attracted and transgender young people, including:

- A social support group for 14 – 21 year olds who identify as gay, lesbian, bi, transgender, intersex or unsure.
- Individual support for young people and families.
- Coordination and collaboration amongst support services to improve access opportunities for same-sex-attracted young people
- Training, education and resources to school staff and community agencies

If you are interested in being part of the group or require additional information about the project, please call or email Monash Youth & Family Services on:

Telephone 03 9561 7359

Email [yrcr@monash.vic.gov.au](mailto:yrcr@monash.vic.gov.au)

# Why write this booklet?

The Project identified that young people often seek support from their friends before they seek support from an adult or professional. A 1998 Australian research report, *Writing Themselves In* (Hillier et al), documented that friends of same-sex attracted young people are usually the first to find out about their friends' sexual identity. There is currently little to no positive resources available for peers of young people who are same-sex attracted. The purpose of this resource is to educate and inform young people about sexual identity and diversity.

*My Friend Is Gay* was originally conceptualised with young people in mind. However, people from all ages and backgrounds can utilise this booklet and learn about understanding and empathising with a same-sex attracted young person. It is a supportive tool that can be used by:

- Friends of same-sex attracted young people.
- Siblings of same-sex attracted young people.
- Parents of same-sex attracted young people.
- Same-sex attracted young people.
- Teachers.
- Students.
- Professionals.

# What do you mean you're gay?!

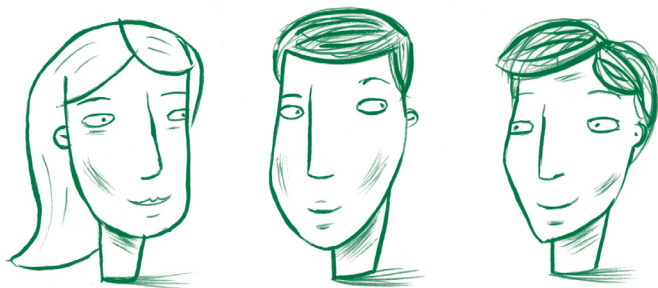
Your friend is simply saying that they have the capacity to be romantically attracted to and/or sexually involved with a person of the same-sex. Your friend's primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards people of the same sex.

Being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or same-sex attracted is not as uncommon or as unusual as you may believe. The world is diverse; races, cultures and religions are varied and so is human sexuality. Sexuality is an aspect of a person's identity – just like their taste in music, their favourite subjects and eye colour.

“?!”

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<sup>1</sup> Equity Standards Branch, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy Support Materials, Department of Education, Tasmania, Australia (2000)



## Growing up, forming an identity, being you...

Everyone should be allowed to be who they are.

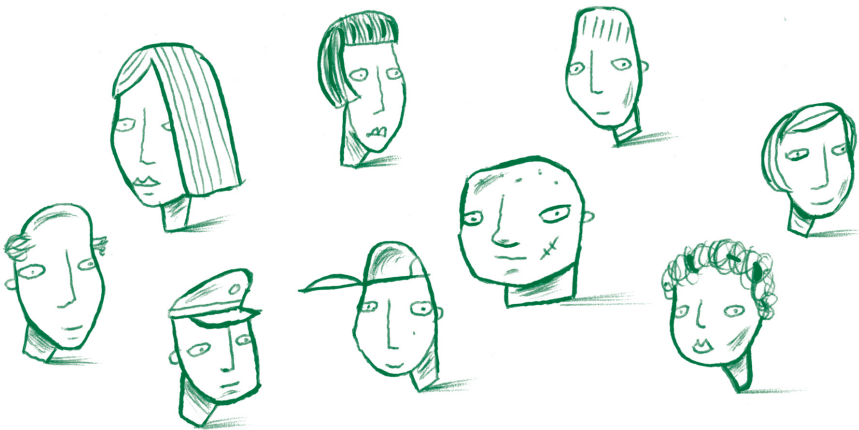
Adolescence is a time many people spend questioning who they are, where they've come from and who they want to be. It is a time that can be challenging and confusing. Part of growing up includes the development of your identity.

In this time, some people explore their sexual attractions. Some people are attracted to boys, some to girls and some to both. People who are attracted to people of the opposite sex may find accepting, exploring and expressing their identity easy. But it can be more difficult for someone attracted to the same-sex.

# Gay people are everywhere!

Most people, at some stage in their lives, will know a person who isn't heterosexual. And it isn't until we really know that person that we realise that they are just like everyone else. They have their own issues they deal with, their own values and experiences, and they have their own ambitions and dreams.

For those people who don't think they know anyone who is attracted to the same-sex, they probably just don't realise it; same-sex attracted people are in all parts of our society. They have all sorts of jobs, have different kinds of families and are different ages. Same-sex attracted people are usually quite different to the characters we see on t.v. and on film.



# It's not always easy being gay...

Some people find it hard to accept that gay and bisexual people exist and may do or say things to try to make them feel bad or strange. This unfairness can make life tough for same-sex attracted people.

## **Those unkind actions and words are forms of homophobia.**

Homophobia is similar to racism, sexism and any other form of prejudice. No one likes to be treated badly because of who they are. Homophobia divides people, creates confusion and spreads hatred.

Being same-sex attracted can be quite difficult especially when confronted by ignorance and fear from people and communities. Hopefully, over time people will begin to understand and accept that gay and bi people are just as valuable as straight people.

The following can make non-heterosexual peoples' lives difficult:

## Homophobia

any action, attitude, or behaviour that limits same-sex attracted people because of their sexuality.

(e.g. preventing a same-sex attracted person from bringing their partner to social functions.)

## Heterosexism

the assumption that heterosexuality is the only norm and that non-heterosexuality is 'alternative' and inferior.

(e.g. presuming that guys have girlfriends.)



## Stereotyping

generalising that all people belonging to a particular group have certain characteristics.

(e.g. thinking that gay men are effeminate (girlie), and lesbians are butch (manly).)<sup>2</sup>

## Prejudice

the attitudes expressed towards people belonging to a particular group based on stereotyped beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

(e.g. not choosing a gay man for your sports team, because 'he's a sissy'.)

# Discrimination

the behaviours expressed towards people belonging to a particular group based on stereotyped beliefs.<sup>4</sup>

(e.g. telling a same-sex attracted woman that she is not invited to a party because you think people will be uncomfortable.)

# Inequality

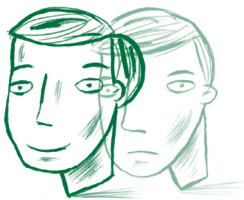
the unfair treatment of people; getting in the way of opportunities, giving people an unfavourable status.

(e.g. teaching safe sexual practices for heterosexuals, but not for same-sex partners.)

# Invisibility

not recognising existence.

(e.g. not realising that people you meet may not be heterosexual.)



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<sup>2</sup> Brase, G Stereotyping Prejudice and Discrimination Definition,.  
Department of Psychology, University of North Florida, Florida, USA (2000)

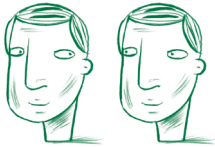
<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> ibid

# Not everyone is gay... or straight

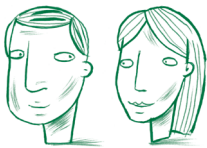
Assuming that everyone we know and meet is 'straight' is an example of heterosexism. People's mums, dads, sisters, and uncles all have sexual identities and they're not necessarily heterosexual. Heterosexuality is common, but not the only norm.

Here are a few words used by people to identify themselves:



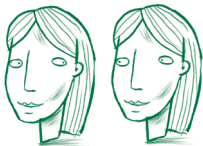
## Gay

A person whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards people of the same sex. This term often refers only to males, but women use it as well.<sup>5</sup>



## Straight

A person whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards people of the opposite sex.



## Lesbian

A woman whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards other women.<sup>6</sup>



## Bisexual

A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of both sexes.<sup>7</sup>

## Transgender

a person who identifies their gender as being different to their physical sex.

## Queer

A term used that covers a range of sexual and gender identities (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender).

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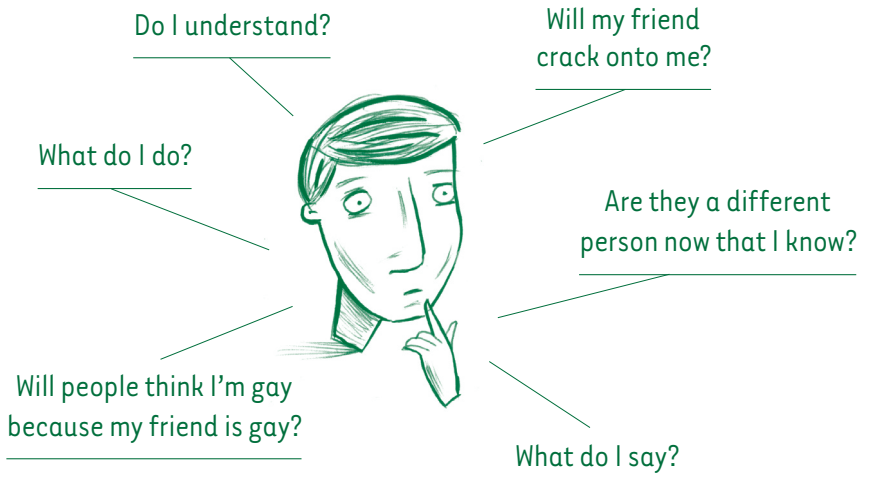
<sup>5</sup> Equity Standards Branch, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy Support Materials, Department of Education, Tasmania, Australia (2000)

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> ibid

# Finding out your friend is gay

Finding out your friend, peer or sibling is non-heterosexual can be a very confronting experience. A number of questions may pop into your mind, like:



In the seconds after your friend 'comes out' to you, all you have to understand is that your friend may need and want you around for support. They are sharing with you personal information that they are probably hoping you will be able to accept.

# Finding out your friend is gay... from someone else

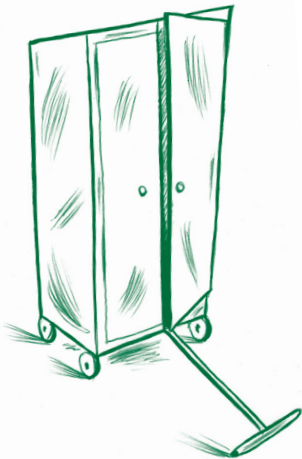
Rumours are often untrue or completely misinterpreted. Finding things out from someone else makes it hard to know the truth.

If you do find out that someone you know is same-sex attracted but they didn't tell you themselves, you don't have to immediately think it's right or wrong. In fact, it shouldn't matter. Just be open and be ready to accept and care for the person – whatever their sexual identity is.

You may want to talk to them and let them know that you are accepting of same-sex attracted people. Be careful not to 'yank them out of the closet'; your friend may not be ready to come out, may not want to come out, or may not be gay.

# The act of coming out

Coming out means different things to different people. It usually has to do with being more aware about same-sex attractions – which often leads to being open with others about sexual identity. People can be ‘out’ in some parts of their lives but not others, whilst some people choose not to come out and others just don’t.<sup>8</sup>



Coming out of the closet is a very courageous task. Your friend may have felt a great deal of anxiety before coming out to you. However, not everyone will need to ‘come out’. Some people don’t feel the need to tell people about their attractions and are happy to keep it to themselves.

People come out for all sorts of reasons. Some come out for the freedom to be who they are; others come out so that their family and friends know who they are completely.

## “THE CLOSET IS AN AWFUL PLACE TO DIE”

*Author Unknown*

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<sup>8</sup> SSAFE in Schools Project, Making Sense: Information for parents, families and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people, Family Planning Victoria, Victoria, Australia (2003)

# Before you can support your friend...

Before you can help your friend, you will first need to figure out a few things for yourself and the person you're helping.

## About you:

- How much do you really know about sexuality?
- What do you know about same-sex attracted people, and where did your knowledge come from?
- How would you feel if you thought everyone else in the world was different from you?
- What if you felt you couldn't talk to anyone else about who you are?



## About your friend:

- What kind of support do they already have?
- How do they feel about the discovery of their sexual identity?
- Are they likely to be bullied at school?
- Are they likely to be safe and happy in their home?
- What other issues does your friend need to deal with?

# Understanding your friend

Before coming out, many same-sex attracted people would have had feelings of being different. At the early stages of questioning their sexuality, they may have been confused. It is common for a same-sex attracted person's confusion to be guided by society's homophobia. Confusion is often the result of not understanding why they are seen as inferior, and less to do with their actual attractions.

## ‘Coming out’

Coming out is a process that is ongoing and can often be very stressful. People come out as a way of accepting and being open about their sexuality. It can help build self-esteem if they are supported, but if they are rejected or neglected it can have damaging effects.



## Isolation & loneliness

Because same-sex attracted people are a minority, they can feel like there's no-one else like them; or perhaps they know there are other gay people, but not in their lives. This may lead to feelings of loneliness.

## Fear of rejection

Most people fear rejection; but for same-sex attracted young people, rejection can come from many people. They may face rejection from their families, friends, and communities. Often, when a person is rejected, they can begin to dislike who they are. This may lead to a lack of confidence and little or no self-worth.



## Unlovable

Your friend may feel like no one loves them or no one could ever love them. It may be a good idea to show your friend that they are loved and supported.

## Cultural background

Australia has a multicultural and diverse society. Your friend's upbringing may be very different to your own. They may have a different ethnic background or religious belief. They may be part of communities that will not acknowledge or tolerate sexual diversity. Unsupportive cultural bonds can increase their fear of rejection and feelings of being unloved. While in every cultural group there are likely to be some members who view homosexuality in negative ways, it is just as likely that there will be other members who are positive and supportive.

# Supporting your friend

Different friends have different purposes at different times of our lives. But ‘a friend in need is a friend indeed’. Being a comforting and supportive person when your friend feels lost, confused, hurt and alone can be difficult.

Also, not all same-sex attracted people feel they need support. They may feel confident and secure about who they are. Your friend may have just wanted to stop hiding their true self from you.

There are no special rules to know or guidelines to follow when being a friend. But remember, your friend thinks highly enough of you to come out to you, so maybe a good start would be telling them “thank you” for the trust.

If a friend does need a supportive person around, sometimes just listening is all that you may need to do.

## \*Some tips

- Show your friend some appreciation for being honest with you; they may have had to muster up a lot of courage before telling you.
- Respect your friend's confidentiality. They may not be ready to tell others right away and may want to tell people in their own way.
- Show your friend that you still care about them. Be the same friend you have always been. Often, the biggest fear for people coming out is that their friends and family will reject them. If you are uneasy, tell your friend; but don't let it destroy your friendship.
- You don't have to be too serious. Some humour may ease the tension you may both be feeling.
- Ask any questions you may have, but be prepared that your friend may not have all the answers. You can save some questions for later or you can find some of the answers yourself.
- Your friend may have a partner. Include your friend's partner in plans as much as you would with any other friend.
- Be prepared to assist your friend if needed. They may have lost the support of other friends and family, and your time and friendship will be even more precious to them. This may include traditional "family" times like Christmas and Australia Day.
- Offer and be available to support your friend in telling others.
- Don't allow your friend to become isolated. Let them know about organisations and places where they can safely meet other same-sex attracted young people.

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\* Adapted from a flier by the Youth Services Bureau, Ottawa Canada

# \*What makes people happy?

- Feeling that they are safe and secure at home, school and when out with friends.
- Being able to talk truthfully with significant people in their life – friends, siblings, parents or teachers.
- Feeling that they are loved, cared for and respected by people they also care about.
- The opportunity to learn new things and also make mistakes.



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\* Commonwealth of Australia, Mind Matters, Mental Health Branch, Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra, Australia (2000)

# Will they want me to be their boyfriend/girlfriend?

Same-sex attracted people are not attracted to everyone of the same sex and do not want to have romantic or sexual relationships with everyone of the same sex. Just like everyone else, finding someone to have a relationship with would depend on the characteristics that make that individual attractive. If your friend does develop a crush on you, take it as a compliment – you have attractive characteristics!

Don't worry that your friend may be attracted or has feelings you can't return, you work through that with communication and honesty. It's the same if someone of the opposite sex has feelings for you that you don't share. Either way, it's probably not worth losing a friend over.

# Telling your friend that you only want a friendship

If someone of the opposite sex asked you out and you didn't want to develop a relationship, you wouldn't take the offer. It is the same situation here. It's not because you look gay or because they think you're gay, it's probably because you are a sweet, genuine and kind person... that's not such a bad thing!

Just in case:

**"I CARE ABOUT YOU AS I ALWAYS HAVE – AS A FRIEND."**



# Gay people make me uncomfortable

At least you're honest with yourself on this one!

Unfortunately you are probably not the only person who is uncomfortable around gay, lesbian and bisexual people. People often fear or dislike what they don't understand. Some people rely on what other people say, but people aren't always right.

**People believed that the world was flat and it isn't; people also believed homosexuality was a psychiatric disorder, and that is also untrue.**

Remembering that diversity is a common part of our society and that diversity encompasses gender, ethnicity and sexuality will help you be more accepting and understanding of your friend's issues.

Homophobia, like all other prejudices, is harmful. It has caused a great deal of unhappiness and promoted discrimination.

For someone who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or same-sex attracted; homophobia can be their greatest enemy – and the enemy of their families and loved ones.

**In day-to-day life, the following are examples of homophobic behaviours and attitudes many of us are guilty of:**

- thinking you can ‘spot one’
- using words like ‘poof’, ‘dyke’, ‘fag’, ‘gay’, ‘lezzo’ etc as an insult
- thinking that a same-sex attracted friend is trying to ‘pick you up’, if they are friendly towards you
- not being supportive of a same-sex attracted friend when they break up with their partner
- making unnecessary or rude comments about, or feeling repulsed by public displays of affection between same-sex partners
- feeling that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are too outspoken about civil rights
- assuming that everyone you meet is heterosexual
- assuming that a lesbian is just a woman who couldn’t find a man or that a lesbian is a woman who wants to be a man
- assuming that a gay man is just a man who couldn’t find a woman or that a gay man is a man who wants to be a woman
- assuming bisexual people are confused or want to ‘play the field’
- not confronting a homophobic remark for fear of being identified with or as same-sex attracted

# Rights & Laws

In Victoria it is against the law to discriminate against a person on the basis of their sexual orientation.

The law also says that an unwelcome action of a sexual nature that offends, humiliates or intimidates a person is called sexual harassment. This means that making jokes and rude comments about someone's sexuality is a form of sexual harassment.

## What you can do about discrimination:

- You can confront a person making a comment and tell them how it doesn't make you or your friend feel good.
- Talk to a teacher, counsellor or trusted adult to make a formal complaint.
- But if all else fails;

You can contact Equal Opportunity Commission

9281 7100

9281 7110 (TTY)

[www.eoc.vic.gov.au](http://www.eoc.vic.gov.au)

The Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission is responsible for eliminating discrimination in Victoria.

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\* Information adapted from the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria

# Young people & schools

Schools have a legal duty to make sure that all students are protected from discrimination, harassment and bullying. All schools should have rules and policies to make sure students and staff are safe.

If your friend is having trouble at school because of bullying or harassment, talk to someone you can trust such as a teacher or school counsellor.

You can also try one of the services listed in the 'helpful contacts' page later on.

# Bullying & harassment

**\*There are many ways that someone can be bullied:**

**Verbal** – name calling, put downs, threats

**Physical** – punching, tripping, kicking, shoving, or having your belongings stolen or damaged

**Social** – being left out, ignored or have rumours spread about them

**Psychological** – dirty looks, stalking

**\*Someone who is bullied may feel:**

- Alone • Sad • Depressed • Angry
- Scared • Confused • Unloved



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\* From ReachOut! website ([www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)) Bullying: What is bullying?

## **\*Why do people bully?**

There are lots of different reasons people bully. Some reasons include:

- They might get power from bullying others.
- Because they are scared, so they try to scare others to hide their feelings.
- Because they are unhappy and take it out on others.
- Because they are being bullied themselves.

## **\*If your friend is being bullied:**

### **Talk to them**

It is a good idea to talk to your friend to find out what is going on with them. Try to remember that your friend may be very sensitive about the situation and may be scared. They may not open up straight away. They may even cry or get angry – don't take it personally. Just be patient and let them know you are their friend.

### **Let them know you care**

Help them feel good about themselves. If your friend is being bullied their confidence may be low and they may feel lonely. It helps to let them know that you care about them. It can often help to point out all the great things they have to offer to help them to feel good about themselves.

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# From Kids HelpLine website ([www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)) InfoSheet 7: Bullying

\* From ReachOut! website ([www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)) Bullying: What is bullying?

## **Include the person into your activities:**

Making a special effort to include your friend into your group's activities may help increase the person's confidence.

## **Stick up for them**

If you see someone being bullied it may be helpful to stick up for them. Take care and make sure you don't make the situation worse or put yourself in danger.

## **Speak to someone**

Letting someone else know about the situation may help you to solve the problem. Try talking to a teacher, counsellor or another adult. It may also be helpful to involve your friend in this process. Together you can go and talk to someone about the situation.

# When you can do no more

It is important and useful to know when your friend needs a professional.

As a good friend, you will also need to be aware of when it's time to ask for professional help. There is only so much you can know and do, so if your friend is unhappy and in need of professional support – know who's out there.

Examples of professional support:

- School counsellor
- Youth workers
- A trusted teacher
- Telephone Help Lines
- Doctor
- School nurse

# Warning signals

The following are some warning signals that may indicate that your friend needs a professional:

## Depression

The word ‘depression’ is often used to describe the feelings of sadness which all of us experience at some stage of our lives. However, depression is more intense and lasts longer than the unhappiness experienced in daily life. The time which depression lasts varies from weeks to years.<sup>9</sup>

## Talk of suicide

It may seem like they’re joking, but you don’t really know that. Suicide is not something that you can laugh off – the help of a professional may help your friend find ways of dealing with their issues in a different way. A friend’s suicidal thoughts or behaviours are not something you are expected to deal with.

## Self-harm

If your friend is hurting him or herself on purpose, it could mean that they are trying to cover up some of their emotional pains with physical ones. If this is the case, maybe you can ask your friend about it – and suggest that they talk to a counsellor or teacher.

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<sup>9</sup> National Mental Health Strategy, What is Depression? Health Services Division, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (2002)

## Low self esteem

When someone doesn't feel good about who they are, it can lead to other unsafe behaviours. So if your friend seems to think poorly of him or herself, compliment them on some of their positive traits to let them start feeling better. Some sporting activities or games are also a good way of making a person feel better about themselves, as it produces chemicals which make the body happy and healthy. Again, seeing a professional could also be worthwhile.

## Issues at home

If your friend is troubled in their home life, is saying negative things about their family or never seems to want to go home, it might be a good idea to get them to talk to someone about those issues. Perhaps they have an unstable home life because their family is unaccepting, the environment is unhealthy or they may be receiving some verbal, emotional or physical abuse. Talking to a professional can help them to sort out stuff at home.

## Drug and/or alcohol misuse

Some people turn to drugs or alcohol as a way of coping with their problems. It may seem effective for them in the short term, but in the long run it can be very harmful. After all, you don't put a band-aid on a broken arm! Encourage them to see a professional for advice and assistance.

**“THE BEST WAY TO ESCAPE FROM  
A PROBLEM IS TO SOLVE IT.”**

*Alan Saporta*

# Myths & stereotypes

To have a clearer understanding of sexual diversity, we need to look at some of the myths about same-sex attracted people. Myths and stereotypes can be very damaging; they form prejudices that lead to discrimination.

Let's look at 10 common myths:

## Myth #1

**People choose to be same-sex attracted.**

People can choose behaviour, but not attraction. We love who we love, because we do. There is no choice.

## Myth #2

**You can easily tell if a person is same-sex attracted**

Assuming that gay men are effeminate (girlie) and lesbians are masculine (manly) is a prejudice that is incorrect. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are diverse in their appearances and their behaviours- and they look like everyone else! Some people may reflect stereotypes, but many do not. An effeminate man, is not always a gay man; we all express our gender in different ways.

## Myth #3

### Same-sex attracted people have certain jobs

“Gay men become hairdressers and lesbians are truck drivers.” This is not usually the case. One famous Australian lesbian is a doctor (Dr. Kerry Phelps), and very famous gay man was a rugby league hero (Ian Roberts). There are same-sex attracted people in every occupation imaginable – unfortunately not everyone can be open about who they are in their workplace.

## Myth #4

### Same-sex attracted people can turn straight people gay

If sexuality is contagious, then why isn't everyone heterosexual? This belief is simply not true. You are who you are, and no one can 'turn' you. Many same-sex attracted people have said that to have relationships with the opposite sex feels unnatural to them. This shows that you can not simply turn gay or straight.

## Myth #5

### Same-Sex-Attracted People Are Mentally Ill

Same-sex attraction and homosexuality are not mental illnesses. The American Psychiatric Association reported that being same-sex attracted is no weirder than being left-handed.

## Myth #6

### **Same-sex partners can't have long-term relationships**

The idea that same-sex-attracted people are unable to commit or maintain a long-term relationship is not true. Many same-sex couples (and these are the people who are less visible to the public eye) maintain close and committed relationships which last many years. A person's search for their 'one true love' is as difficult for a same-sex attracted person as it is for an opposite-sex attracted person.

## Myth #7

### **Bisexuals have to choose: either gay or straight**

Bisexual people are emotionally and/or physically attracted to both men and women and it is unlikely that they are confused or unsure whether they are gay or straight. Bisexual individuals are simply attracted to both sexes and should not be pushed to 'pick a team'.

## Myth #8

**Gay men are HIV positive or can easily infect others with AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)**

Today, most people know this is not true. AIDS is not a 'gay disease'. Most of the people in the world who have AIDS are heterosexual.

## Myth #9

**Gays and lesbians were sexually abused as children**

People have many different experiences as they grow up. Unfortunately, some people (gay and straight) are sexually abused, but it doesn't mean these people turn out gay. A lot of same-sex attracted people had very healthy and happy childhoods.

## Myth #10

**Lesbians Hate Men**

Although lesbians predominantly don't want romantic or sexual relationships with men, it doesn't mean that they can't be friends. It's just the same with straight people – just because they don't want romantic or sexual relationships with members of the same gender, it doesn't mean they hate or dislike people of the same gender.

# Things same-sex attracted young people want to say

Same-sex attracted young people were asked what they wanted heterosexuals to know about them.

These were some of their responses:

“ Just because I’m your friend, it doesn’t mean I’m straight. Just because you’re my friend, it doesn’t mean you’re gay.”

“ Yes, I’m a lesbian.

No I don’t want every girl.  
I just want my girl.”

“ I’m more than just gay. I’m someone’s son, someone’s brother, someone’s student, someone’s hero. I could even be your friend.”

“ I can’t tolerate tolerance- but I will accept acceptance.”

“ If I’m sad sometimes, don’t worry. It’s not because I’m lonely, it’s because I can’t understand some people’s selfishness.”

“ If you have a problem with gays and lesbians, just remember: it’s your problem.”

“ Just because I’m gay, doesn’t mean I’m perving on you.”

“ How dare you presume I’m heterosexual!”

“ Sticks and stones may break my bones, but your ignorance will hinder you for life.”

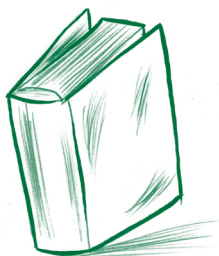
“ I can understand why a person would have a problem with what I’m wearing, or what I sometimes say. But having a problem with who I love? Well at least I’m not spreading hate.”

“ If I can’t love a girl, just because I’m a girl ... isn’t that sexism?”

# Useful contacts & networks

You can use these resources for yourself, to learn more about diversity or you can help a friend by guiding them toward some fantastic books, movies or people.

On top of the information provided here, there is still A HEAP more out there. Some stuff might even be better, so give them a go too!



## Books

**Peter** — by Sarah Walker

**Annie on my Mind** — by Nancy Garden

**What are Ya?** — by Jenny Pausacker

**Two Weeks With the Queen** — by Morris Gleitzman

**Hide & Seek** — by Jenny Pausacker

**Dare, Truth or Promise** — by Jenny Pausacker

**Rubyfruit Jungle** — by Rita Mae Brown

**Inside Out** — by Erin Shale

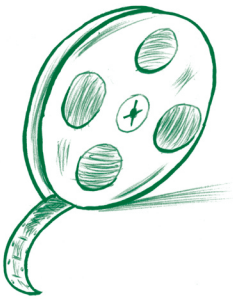
**Holding The Man** — by Timothy Conigrave

**Am I Blue?** — by Marion Dane Bauer

**Cody** — by Keith Hale

**Curious Wine** — by Katherine Forrest

**Reflections of Rock Lobster** — by Aaron Fricke



# Movies

**Get Real (1999)** – Starring Ben Silverstone

**The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love (1995)** –  
Starring Laurel Holloman

**Kissing Jessica Stein (2002)** – Starring Jennifer Westfeldt

**Beautiful Thing (1996)** – Starring Glenn Barry

**Chasing Amy (1997)** – Starring Ben Affleck

**If These Walls Could Talk 2 (2000)** – Starring  
Ellen DeGeneres

**Broken Hearts Club (2000)** – Starring Dean Cain

**But I'm a Cheerleader (1999)** – Starring Natasha Lyonne

**The Sum of Us (1995)** – Starring Russell Crowe

**The Birdcage (1996)** – Starring Robin Williams

**In & Out (1997)** – Starring Kevin Klein

**Love and Other Catastrophes (1997)** – Starring  
Frances O'Connor

**Mambo Italiano (2003)** – Starring Luke Kirby

**Kinsey (2004)** – Starring Liam Neeson

**Saving Face (2004)** – Starring Joan Chen

**Transamerica (2006)** – Starring Felicity Huffman

**Food of Love (2006)** – Starring Juliet Stevenson

**The Trip (2005)** – Starring Steve Braun



## Websites

**The ALSO Foundation** – [www.also.org.au](http://www.also.org.au)

Peak Victorian organisation for the gay and lesbian community.

**Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays** –  
[www.pflag.org.au](http://www.pflag.org.au)

Support and information for people who care about a gay or lesbian person.

**Minus18 Victoria** – [www.minus18.org](http://www.minus18.org)

Events, friends and resources for same-sex attracted young people in Victoria.

**Mogenic** – [www.mogenic.com](http://www.mogenic.com)

Sydney-based online portal for same-sex attracted young people.

**Equal Opportunity Commission** – [www.oec.vic.gov.au](http://www.oec.vic.gov.au)

Information about your rights and responsibilities.

**Reach Out!** – [www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)

Huge resource database for a range of issues affecting young people.

**SSAFE (Same Sex Attracted Friendly Environments)**

Schools website – [www.ssafeschools.org.au](http://www.ssafeschools.org.au)

Information for students and staff around lessening homophobia in schools

**Sex Life! (Family Planning Victoria)** – [www.fpv.org.au](http://www.fpv.org.au)

Victorian online learning centre about sex and sexuality.

**Purple Bus** – [www.geocities.com/purplebusstop](http://www.geocities.com/purplebusstop)

Locally-produced magazine for same-sex attracted young people.

**Hares 'n' Hyenas Bookshop** – [www.hares-hyenas.com.au](http://www.hares-hyenas.com.au)

Victorian bookshop with a large range of gay and lesbian themed books.



## Phone numbers

**Care Ring** – 136 169

Care Ring provides compassionate and responsive telephone counselling to all people in personal crisis, with timely information and facilitated referral to relevant services.

**Kids Help Line** – 1800 55 1800

Kids Help Line exists to assist people to develop strategies and skills which enable them to more effectively manage their own lives. An integral part of this mission is the provision of free, accessible national services which are founded on the principles of empowerment.

**Gay and Lesbian Switchboard** – 9827 8544

Switchboard's service is free, anonymous, and confidential. Phones are staffed by trained volunteer counsellors who are themselves gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

**Pride & Diversity Project (City of Monash) – 9561 7359**

Pride and Diversity is a free and confidential service where you can get information, support and referrals that are relevant to you.

**Family Planning Victoria – 9654 4766**

FPV offer reliable, up-to-date and non-judgmental information about contraception, family planning, safe sex and sexual and reproductive health.

**Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (Police Victoria),  
Lisa Keyte – 9871 4188**

The GLLO's mission is to create a sense of trust between same-sex attracted people and the police force.

**PFLAG Victoria – 9827 8408**

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promote the health and wellbeing of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons, their families and their friends.

# My friend isn't gay

Just because a friend or someone else close isn't same-sex attracted (that you know of) it doesn't mean you shouldn't know about sexual diversity.

By taking the time now to learn about diversity, you can maybe help someone in the future, and assist in educating others.

**Just remember, who you love is not as important as how you love.**



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CITY OF  
MONASH



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