

OREGON'S SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH: AN AT-RISK POPULATION

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
I. Introduction	3
A. Statement of Purpose	3
B. History and Work of the Task Force	3
1. Youth Group Meetings	3
2. Survey of Youth Service Providers	4
3. Literature Review	5
II. Profile of the Population	7
A. Definitions	7
B. Demographics	7
C. Coming Out: Recognition and Acceptance of Sexual Orientation	8
D. Racial and Ethnic Sexual Minority Youth	9
III. Challenges to Sexual Minorities	11
A. Homophobia and Heterosexism	11
B. Isolation, Depression, and Suicide	11
C. Alcohol and Drug Abuse	12
D. Crimes of Violence	13
1. Violence in the Home	13
2. Violence in the Schools/Peer Perpetrators	14
3. Violence in Institutions	15
E. Homelessness/Street Life	15
F. Teenage Prostitution/Sexual Abuse	15
G. Teenage Pregnancy	15
H Sexually Transmitted Diseases	16
I. Rural Life	17
IV. Impact of Institutions: Schools, Religion, and Families	19
A. School	19
B. Religion	20
C. Families of Lesbian and Gay Youth	21
D. Foster Care/Adoptions	21
E. Children Raised in Lesbian or Gay Families	22
V. Needs for Social Support	25
A. Role Models	25
B. Socialization/Recreation	25
C. Access to Information	26
VI. Conclusion and Recommendations	27
A. Youth Recommendations	27
B. Task Force Recommendations	28
1. Individual Case Level	28
2. Organizational Level	28
3. Systems Level	29
VII. References	31
VIII. Appendices	33
A. Policy Positions of National Professional Organizations	33
B. Oregon Resources	35

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth was convened in December 1989 to examine the issues and challenges Oregon's sexual minority youth face as well as to study the experiences of young people growing up with lesbian, gay, or bisexual parents. Task Force members engaged in three key activities; members: (1) met with lesbian, gay male and bisexual youth to learn about their needs, concerns, and experiences and, additionally, met with children of lesbian mothers; (2) developed and disseminated a questionnaire to youth service providers; and (3) reviewed the relevant literature.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual youth receive services from multiple systems including child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, education, and health. To date, these service systems have—by and large—failed to identify or address the special needs of sexual minority youth.

Many sexual minority youth experience feelings of extreme isolation from their peers; lack role models or other information about development as a healthy and productive lesbian, gay or bisexual adult; and experience delays in their adolescent development as they do not have the opportunities to date and socialize that their heterosexual peers enjoy.

While most lesbian, gay and bisexual youth emerge as healthy adults from the struggles associated with adjusting to a stigmatized and reviled minority status, their journey is lonely, uncharted, and unsupported by families, friends, neighbors, service providers and others. The difficulties these youth encounter may expose them to social isolation, family rejection, violence, school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, depression and suicide.

Individual case, organizational and systems level changes are required to ensure the provision of appropriate services to sexual minority youth. At the case level, services should be individualized to address the needs of each youth, family involvement in service provision should be encouraged, and family services should be developed that will provide information and support. Appropriate organizational level changes include development of non-discrimination personnel and service provision policies, establishment of linkages to sexual minority professionals and organizations, and development of supportive social opportunities (such as rap groups, dances, athletic events) for youth. Systems level changes include the establishment of public policy protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, the infusion of information on sexual diversity within professional schools' curricula, and the development of policy positions supporting the foster care or adoptive placement of youth in approved sexual minority households. Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth members are available to consult with agencies and organizations as they begin to examine how providers can best serve lesbian, gay and bisexual youth.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The 1989 *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services reports that sexual minority youth are visible at an increasingly younger age:

With the advent of the sexual revolution and gay liberation movement of the past two decades, gay and lesbian youth have been increasingly aware of their feelings and coming to terms with their orientation at an earlier age than ever before. This has placed them into direct conflict with all of the traditional childrearing institutions and support systems of our society. Increasingly, this occurs while the youngsters are still living at home with their family, attending public school and developing a sense of their own self worth in comparison with their peers and the expectations of society as a whole. (Gibson, 1989, p. 3-112).

The struggles these young people experience as they develop their identities as sexual minority group members may expose them to social isolation, family rejection, violence, school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, depression and suicide. Concern about these issues led to the formation of the Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth and a commitment to work to ensure the development and delivery of appropriate services to sexual minority youth throughout the child welfare, education, mental health, juvenile justice, and health systems.

B. HISTORY AND WORK OF THE TASK FORCE

The Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth was initially convened in December 1989. Individuals from Oregon Children's Services Division, Oregon Health Division, Oregon Children and Youth Services Commission, Portland Public Schools, and the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, joined with others from Ecumenical Ministries, Cascade AIDS Project Phoenix Rising Foundation, Lesbian Community Project, Right to Privacy, Inc., and from Portland metropolitan area suburban school districts as well as various treatment centers and agencies serving youth and families to examine the issues and challenges Oregon's sexual minority youth face. The Task Force additionally studied the experiences of young people growing up with lesbian, gay, or bisexual parents.

The Task Force has actively coordinated its activities with the Oregon Children and Youth Service Office located in Salem and with the Multnomah County Youth Program Office. Task Force members have maintained a close working relationship with the Superintendent's Office of Portland Public Schools, as well as the Oregon Children's Services Division (Multnomah County branch office), Multnomah County Juvenile Justice Division and other Multnomah County offices.

The Task Force's stated mission is to:

support the rights and needs of sexual minority youth to develop according to their own unique characteristics. Toward this end, the Task Force supports responsible policies, education of the community, and the provision of appropriate services.

Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth members engaged in three key activities; they: (1) met with lesbian, gay male and bisexual youth to learn about their needs, concerns, and experiences; (2) gathered information from youth service providers; and (3) reviewed the relevant literature.

1. Youth Group Meetings

In order to identify and clarify the needs of lesbian, gay male, and bisexual young people, youth group meetings composed primarily of homosexual and bisexual adolescents were held in the Portland metropolitan area between November 1990 and January 1991. These young people were asked to identify the challenges and needs they face as lesbian, gay male, or bisexual youth. Participants shared their experiences as sexual minority youth in relation to their families, friendships,

schools, receipt of social services, religious affiliations, and development of intimate relationships. Additional topics addressed included: self-esteem, depression, and suicide; alcohol and drug use; violence and abuse; sexually-transmitted diseases; pregnancy; and street life. The comments of participating youth are included throughout this report.

The Task Force committee members involved in this collection of personal testimony from young people included a high school teacher, a high school counselor, a direct service provider to lesbian and gay street youth, a social worker with the county youth program, an individual from a Quaker social change agency, a lesbian college student and a grassroots lesbian activist. Staff from several youth-serving organizations assisted committee members in identifying young people willing to participate in the group meetings. For the purpose of these meetings, "sexual minority" was defined as individuals with a non-heterosexual orientation.

Four youth group meetings, facilitated by Task Force committee members, were held with: (1) seven members of Windfire, a social and support group coordinated by Phoenix Rising Foundation (a Portland lesbian and gay social service agency); (2) sixteen college students affiliated with Homophile, a Lewis and Clark College student organization; (3) seven individuals involved in a private social club for sexual minority youth; and (4) four children of lesbian mothers. The one and one-half to two hour meetings were tape recorded and thereafter transcribed with the consent of each participant.

Of the thirty individuals who participated in the three sexual minority youth group meetings (a) over half were under 21 years of age; (b) more females than males participated; (c) two individuals identified themselves as heterosexual and the remainder as sexual minorities; and (d) five participants identified themselves as non-Caucasian. The comments of participating youth are included throughout this report.

2. Survey of Youth Service Providers

In an effort to assess the services presently offered to sexual minority youth in the Portland metropolitan area, Task Force members surveyed youth-serving professionals (1) to determine the extent to which youth agencies and schools are equipped to provide services to sexual minority youth and (2) to identify training needs among community youth-serving agencies. Questionnaires were distributed to Oregon Children's Services Division (Multnomah County branch office), community-based organizations currently contracting with Multnomah County for the provision of youth services, and the Multnomah County juvenile justice system. Forty-two completed questionnaires were received. The survey was completed in October 1990. Comments of providers are set forth throughout this report.

a. Community-Based Organizations

There is little to encourage [sexual minority youth] to trust us or any other mainstream agency. AGENCY DIRECTOR.

We have lack of awareness and have not as yet addressed these issues in terms of specific training, discussion and sensitivity. The lack of awareness is a major obstacle. AGENCY DIRECTOR.

Adult values would have to be addressed, especially in schools, before kids could reasonably trust enough to take part in services. Kids would have to be convinced they would get support and backup. AGENCY DIRECTOR.

There must be education about lesbian and gay issues for all youth. AGENCY DIRECTOR.

The community-based organizations contracting with Multnomah County provide a range of services including counseling services; big brother/big sister programs; employment services; diversion services from the juvenile justice system; parenting services; alcohol and drug treatment; recreational opportunities; mental health treatment; shelter; pregnancy counseling; drop-in facilities; transitional housing; treatment for sexual offenders; medical services; educational programs; and services targeted to ethnic and racial minority youth and families.

Twenty surveys were distributed to community-based organizations and fourteen were completed and returned. The surveys were completed by each organization's program director. These organizations serve a total of approximately 1,100 clients.

Of all respondents, the community-based program directors were the most aware that they provide services to sexual minority youth. One director stated that fifteen percent of the agency's clients self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Three respondents noted that there are several lesbians and gay men on their staffs. Four respondents who work with high risk, homeless, and run-away youth expressed a high degree of knowledge about and comfort with sexual minority issues; other mental health facilities indicated that they had only a moderate level of knowledge and comfort with these issues, but recognized the importance of addressing these issues and promoting staff training.

The Youth Service Centers work with a broad range of youth and expressed less knowledge about and comfort with sexual minority youth issues than high risk providers as well as a lack of policies and programming that serve sexual minority youth. Youth Service Center respondents and those from some mental health and counseling centers noted that they probably have many sexual minority youth clients; however, these youth do not disclose their sexual orientation.

b. Juvenile Justice

The overwhelming "macho" image of both staff and detained youth usually destroys trust and risk-taking by "minority" youth. GROUP WORKER.

The juvenile justice system handles dependency and delinquency cases that have been referred to the Circuit Court. The juvenile department provides counseling and referrals to community services and employment, as well as detention, diversion, and probation services. Eighteen completed questionnaires were returned from five groups: administration and supervision, counselors, groupworkers, support staff, and resource and development.

Juvenile justice respondents reported a moderate level of knowledge of sexual minority youth issues. Several respondents described a general lack of knowledge and awareness on the part of staff. One respondent indicated a high degree of both knowledge and comfort with sexual minority youth issues; yet defined sexual minority youth as racial and ethnic minority youth who are sexually active. Most respondents noted that sexual minority youth issues are unique; however, no specific policies or programs address the needs of this population. Juvenile justice respondents described the high degree of intimidation of lesbian and gay youth by other youth and overtly prejudicial and discriminatory behavior by some staff members.

c. Oregon Children's Services Division

Children's Services Division (CSD) provides protective services for children who have been neglected or abused, foster care for children and youth, adoption services, and counseling for children and families. No estimates of the number of sexual minority youth served by CSD are available. Ten completed questionnaires were received.

Most respondents reported that sexual minority youth issues are not unique enough to warrant specific policies and programming, although some mentioned that they are concerned with foster care placement issues. When asked which resources and services would be the most valuable, caseworkers requested all listed services—particularly social and support groups for sexual minority youth, information on resources for families and friends, and staff training regarding issues of emerging sexual orientation, gender identity, and coming out.

3. Literature Review

In addition to meeting with sexual minority adolescents and surveying youth-serving agencies, Task Force members reviewed the literature on sexual minority youth. This report summarizes the Task Force's review of the literature as well as selected comments of the youth and providers who participated in the work of the Task Force.

II. PROFILE OF THE POPULATION

A. DEFINITIONS

The term "sexual minorities" describes lesbians, gay males, bisexual people, and transsexual individuals. The United States Department of Health and Human Services' 1989 *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* offers the following definitions:

Lesbian and gay male youth are young people with a primary attraction to members of the same sex for sexual and intimate relationships. **Bisexual** youth have an attraction to members of both sexes for sexual and intimate relationships. We use the term orientation rather than preference to describe this attraction because we still do not know how it originates. We are not certain to what extent genetics, socialization factors or individual choice determines either a homosexual or heterosexual orientation. **Transsexual** youth are young people who believe they have a gender identity that is different from the sex they were born with. This includes young males who believe they are really females mistakenly born in a male body and young females who believe they are really males mistakenly born in a female body. Sexual orientation and gender identity are separate issues for each individual. Transsexuals may have a heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual orientation. Homosexuals are rarely confused about their gender identity with lesbians believing they are women and gay males believing they are men.

There are indications that individuals may be predisposed to their sexual orientation from an early age. A gay or lesbian orientation in adolescence is not just a phase the youth is going through.

...Most youth who identify as heterosexuals and homosexuals will continue to do so as adults. Youth are more likely to underreport a homosexual orientation because of difficulties in accepting themselves and the fear of a hostile response. (Gibson, 1989, p. 3-114, 3-115). (Emphasis added).

Transvestites are individuals who dress in the clothing of the opposite gender. These individuals may also be regarded as sexual minorities. Few lesbians, gay males, or bisexual individuals cross-dress. Martin and Hetrick (1988) explain that cross-dressing occurring among sexual minority youth is often designed to exaggerate the behaviors society expects. Alternatively, lesbian, gay or bisexual youth cross-dressing may reflect an individual's acceptance of cultural attitudes about homosexuality—i.e., if a male is attracted to another male he must be feminine. Typically, however, transvestism is regarded as a characteristic of heterosexual males.

Until a decade or so ago, most psychological and psychiatric texts gave prominence to the idea, for example, that transvestism often was based on a homosexual orientation. This is now known not to be the case. Today, in fact, the definition of transvestism requires a heterosexual orientation. (Docter, 1988, p. 6).

The efforts of the Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth have focused upon lesbian, gay male, and bisexual youth. Members of the Task Force recognize, however, that transvestite and—particularly—transsexual youth, have specialized needs. Task Force members understand that "[t]ranssexual youth are perhaps the most outcast of all young people and face a grave risk of suicidal feelings and behavior" (Gibson, 1989, p. 3-123).

For purposes of this report, "youth" are young people ranging in age from 12 through 24. It is during these years that many gay males, lesbians, and bisexuals first become aware of an attraction to persons of their own gender.

B. DEMOGRAPHICS

Estimates on the prevalence of homosexuality among adolescents vary widely. A key factor contributing to the difficulty in identifying lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are efforts to equate homosexual *behavior* with a homosexual or bisexual sexual *orientation* (Savin-Williams, 1990).

Given the complexity of whether one defines homosexuality by reference to orientation,



behavior, or self-awareness and the fact that many teens experience a diversity of sexual behaviors and an emerging sexual identity over a period of several years, a process that may not be completed until young adulthood, it is difficult to assess the prevalence of a homosexual orientation among adolescents. Despite this handicap, it is abundantly clear that gay and lesbian youth exist during childhood and adolescence—with or without homosexual behavior and/or a homosexual identity. (Savin-Williams, 1990, p. 5).

Within lesbian and gay communities it is widely believed that approximately ten percent of the population is homosexual. *One Teenager in Ten: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth* (Alyson Publications, 1983) and Project 10 [Percent] in the Los Angeles Unified School District are examples of expressions of this popularly held sentiment.

According to 1990 United States Census figures, Oregon has a population of 2,842,321 people. Of that number 496,644 are ages twelve through twenty-four (Center for Population Research and Census, Portland State University, June 3, 1991). While it is not, in fact, known what percentage of Oregon's population are sexual minorities; adoption of the widely held ten percent belief suggests that almost 285,000 Oregonians are lesbian or gay. Of that number, approximately 50,000 are youth ages twelve through twenty-four. If approximately ten percent of the population is lesbian or gay, almost one-third of the population is either homosexual or closely related to someone who is homosexual.

While some young people have successfully adjusted to their sexual orientation; others are struggling to deny, avoid or adapt themselves to a minority status that subjects them to public scorn and harassment; and others have not yet recognized their difference. What is certain, however, is that only a small handful of these youth have received recognition and support as they struggle with the challenges of membership in a sexual minority group.

C. COMING OUT: RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

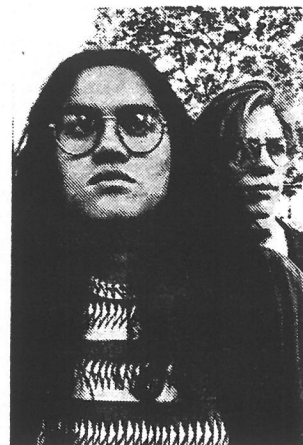
At 18 I had to totally redefine how I saw myself, unlike when you're younger and you're straight, you can move into your role and people help you and coax you along. But all of a sudden I woke up one day and realized that I was drastically different. I really needed to deal with this...I had no self-esteem because I was still pretty much caught up in the hickville attitudes that gay was wrong, so it was kind of hard. Once I got here and found a support group, it was like I had a ton of self-esteem, and now I even fight back when people say stupid things about homosexuals. Actually, for me, my self-esteem went up once I found out that I was gay. If [d] been dating this guy, but I [had] absolutely no attraction for him whatsoever. I should be feeling something for him, but all I feel is guilt because he loves me and I don't love him. It feels like I'm somehow inadequate because I can't enjoy necking with him. When I finally figured out I was gay, it was like, "Oh, boy, this is really nice."
WINDFIRE MEMBER.

She asked me if I had been going to a counselor. I said I had made an appointment with Phoenix Rising, and she knew about Phoenix Rising. She said it was a really good place to go, "I'm glad you're going there." I said, "Wow." WINDFIRE YOUTH.

Gay and lesbian youth pass through a number of stages as they "come out of the closet." Schneider (1989) notes that the tasks of coming out parallel the developmental tasks of adolescence: establishing a personal identity, and developing self-esteem and the socialization skills needed to maintain friendships and intimate relationships.

Coming out symbolizes a key dimension of gay life. The idiom "coming out" implies a single event. In many ways, though, temporally, spatially, and socially, coming out is a process of identifying one's sexual orientation to widening circles of persons, beginning with the self. This process may entail several discrete steps leading to an uncertain outcome. Some teenagers describe coming out as self-identification alone. Others say they have come out only if they have discussed their orientation with intimates, or, again, only if they are emerging into a gay lifestyle. For the most open of them, the circle describing "out" becomes increasingly public and includes a gay identity openly expressed to everyone: family, friends,

colleagues, and strangers. Each person, in his or her own terms, negotiates a balance between levels of concealment (suggesting denial) and levels of openness (creating vulnerability to harassment and discrimination), in degrees that are adaptive to the self at present. This adolescent balance may of course shift over the life course, with coming out symbolizing a process of continuous revelation and becoming. (Gerstel, Feraios, & Herdt, 1989, p. 87).



Coleman (1982) and Cass (1979) have described the developmental phases homosexual youth may experience as they acknowledge and accept their sexual orientation. The first developmental task for a lesbian, gay male or bisexual youth is the initial recognition or identification of his or her homosexual thoughts or behavior. These feelings and behaviors cause confusion as they are at odds with the assumptions of others—as well as their own beliefs—that they are heterosexual. Youth rarely disclose their suspicions and concerns to others at this early stage.

The task of developing a sense of self-acceptance begins when youth acknowledge to themselves that they may be homosexual or bisexual and begin to carefully identify people to whom they can disclose their orientation. Self-disclosure is a courageous act given the serious risk of rejection youth face.

“Coming out” publicly begins when youth start to explore social, dating, and sexual activity with their same-sex peers. Many youth may self-identify as bisexual during this early stage of same-sex explorations and may later conclude that they are gay or lesbian.

The close friendships and intimate relationships lesbian, gay male, and bisexual youth may develop present these youth with all of the issues heterosexual youth experience as well as the additional pressures of maintaining relationships that enjoy no support from family, friends, classmates, teachers, and co-workers.

Integration or synthesis of a lesbian, gay, or bisexual orientation occurs when individuals incorporate their private and public identities into one self-image and are supported by their personal communities. Homosexual or bisexual identity becomes a component of an individual's larger personal identity.

D. RACIAL AND ETHNIC SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

I'm black, and I don't care if people know I'm a fag. I have a friend and he has a boyfriend. He was hidden, completely closeted. He refused to tell anyone he was gay...there was no way in the world we would have thought he was gay because he was a member of a gang. He was so scared to be seen with a white guy that was gay. For blacks, it's like really hard to be gay. AFRICAN-AMERICAN GAY MALE YOUTH.

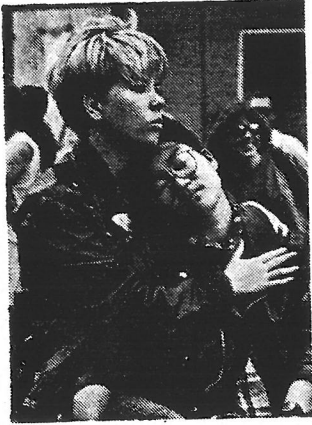
One thing is I think being Native American and studying my heritage really helped me a lot to accept being gay, because Native Americans traditionally believed it was okay to be gay, and a lot of the tribes were pretty accepting. So when I read about that, I was like, hey, it was really okay. NATIVE AMERICAN HOMOSEXUAL YOUTH.

I would ask her, “Mom, what do you think about Baclas?” Baclas is a Tagalog word for gay men in the Philippines. She's Filipino. [A] lot of her friends were gay men. They're really nice, they're really good friends...,” but I think she secretly wants me to get married. FILIPINO-AMERICAN GAY YOUTH.

“I am a double minority. Caucasian gays don't like gay Chinese, and the Chinese don't like the gays. It would be easier to be white. It would be easier to be straight. It's hard to be both.” (Tremble, Schneider, & Appathurai, 1989, p. 263, citing The Body Politic).

Lesbian, gay male and bisexual youth of color (African-American, Asian-American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic-American, Native American, and Alaska Natives) live within a minimum of three communities: their ethnic minority community, the lesbian and gay community, and the majority community.

While each community provides fundamental needs, serious consequences emerge if such communities were to be visibly integrated and merged. A common feeling engendered by



this complexity in lifestyle is one of being unable to integrate the pieces of one's life. It requires a constant effort to maintain oneself in three different worlds, each of which fails to support significant aspects of a person's life. The complications that arise may inhibit one's ability to adapt and to maximize personal potentials...To live as a minority within a minority leads to heightened feelings of isolation, depression and anger centered around the fear of being separated from all support systems, including the family. (Morales, 1990, p. 219).

Historically, the study of lesbians and gays in North America has been generally limited to the examination of the middle-class, Caucasian experience (Tremble, Schneider, & Apathurai, 1989). Recently, however,

[s]ome thorny issues for racial and ethnic minorities have been identified. These include: (a) particular difficulties in coming out to the family; (b) finding a niche in the gay and lesbian community in the face of discrimination; (c) difficulties in reconciling sexual orientation and ethnic or racial identity. (Tremble, Schneider, & Apathurai, 1989, p. 254).

Sexual minority youth of color often experience two types of prejudice—racism and homophobia. Ethnic and racial sexual minorities are frequently feel that they must align themselves with either the lesbian and gay community or their racial or ethnic group—there is no common meeting ground. These youth experience discrimination within the dominant culture because of their race and sexual orientation; within their racial or ethnic communities because of their sexual orientation; and within lesbian and gay communities because of their race or ethnicity.

III. CHALLENGES TO SEXUAL MINORITIES

A. HOMOPHOBIA AND HETEROSEXISM

I didn't know that gay people could come out of regular families or live in regular places, that we weren't, you know, that gay people weren't people who you only saw on TV and all hung out in New York City and San Francisco, you know, were perverts or whatever. I think it more has to do with the power of the pack, you know. We're all together, you know, you're outside. SUPPORT GROUP MEMBER.

And family counseling, my counselor didn't want to discuss being gay....She refused to talk about it...It was like it wasn't a topic. It would get dropped automatically. HOMOSEXUAL YOUTH.

The issue is an important one, and must be addressed. I believe many staff (within the county as a whole) suffer from homophobia and/or heterosexism. MULTNOMAH COUNTY STAFF PERSON.

"No inappropriate sexual behavior, no sexual harassment, no racist remarks, and no comments of a homophobic nature will be tolerated at the Burnside Projects Youth Shelter. In the Youth Shelter you are all equal and will be treated as such. If you do not comply with staffs' requests to stop racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks you will be asked to leave the shelter." BURNSIDE PROJECTS YOUTH SHELTER RULE #24. *All youth must read and sign rules upon first admission.*

"Homophobia" is the fear or hatred of gay and lesbian people (Whitlock, 1989). It is an irrational socially sanctioned prejudice or hostility. As is true of other forms of prejudice and oppression, homophobia is learned. It manifests itself in a variety of behaviors and attitudes that reinforce the invisibility and silence of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Homophobia affects individuals regardless of sexual orientation. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and adults may similarly internalize societal stereotypes and learn to hate themselves.

Homophobia within an individual may manifest itself as a fear of showing affection for members of the same sex. It also may be exhibited by a hesitancy to display any behaviors or characteristics of the opposite sex's role stereotype for fear of being labelled homosexual.

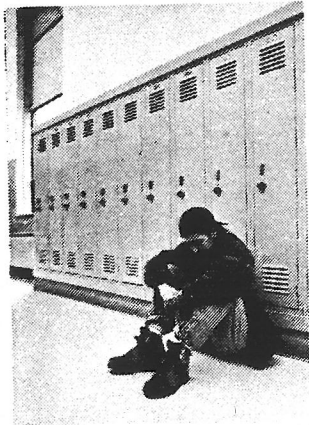
An individual may exhibit his or her homophobia for a number of reasons including: fear of the unknown; fear of one's own homosexual feelings; or fear that equal treatment of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals will undermine the dominant heterosexual society. Homophobia is interwoven throughout our society, both at the individual and institutional levels (Whitlock, 1989).

The term "heterosexism" is used to identify cultural and institutional forms of homophobia such as the false assumption that everyone is heterosexual. "[H]eterosexual bias is defined as a belief system that values heterosexuality as superior to and/or more 'natural' than homosexuality" (Morin, 1977, p. 629).

A major manifestation of homophobia and heterosexism is the hostility or bias exhibited against lesbians and gay males. This hostility is regarded as more acceptable than is bias against other groups. Surveys indicate that about three-quarters of lesbians and gays have been harassed by name-calling. Moreover, one in four gays and lesbians have been physically assaulted (Coleman, *New York Times*, 1990).

B. ISOLATION, DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

I have pretty massive experiences with being suicidal. When I was in sixth grade, I had no friends. All of a sudden I was in a school that was rabidly heterosexual. During lunch people were all over school making out. It's still hard for me to talk about it, but I've attempted suicide on a regular basis, like four or five times a week for six months, if not longer, and I don't remember all of it. It was purely because I was being taunted, harassed, called a



dyke, you know. It was because I wasn't heterosexual and I wasn't behaving in school in a heterosexual manner. And I didn't have anybody to talk to really because no one really wanted to be friends with someone who wasn't "normal." This was in sixth grade. I was 11. I had several attempts at suicide before the age of 16. LESBIAN WINDFIRE MEMBER.

I want to talk about my pain. The first time I considered suicide was in sixth grade and I took twenty aspirin...my behavior was very self-destructive, self-mutilating. I never really wanted to kill myself but just to hurt myself because I hated myself so much for not being what people expected me to be. MALE COLLEGE STUDENT.

I knew about the [support] group a long time before I went. Just knowing that there was this group when things got that bad that, you know, the stress was worse than my fear, there was somewhere to go and I could really find someone to talk to was even more important than actually having someone to talk to. WINDFIRE MEMBER.

Lesbian, gay male, and bisexual youth learn that their sexual orientation is abnormal or sinful; that lesbians and gays are the frequent target of taunts and jokes; and that gay or lesbian characters in books or movies typically kill themselves. They internalize and react to society's negative attitudes toward homosexuality. Low self-esteem and serious depression are common responses these young people have to: (1) the extreme social isolation they experience; (2) the obsessive concern with maintaining the secret of their sexual orientation they develop; and (3) the fear of violence that lesbian and gay youth experience. "One of the loneliest people in any high school in America is the rejected and isolated gay adolescent" (Tartagni, 1978).

According to the 1989 *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* gay and lesbian youth may:

suffer from chronic depression and [may be] at high risk of attempting suicide when the pressure becomes too much to bear. They may run away from home with no one understanding why. A suicidal crisis may be precipitated by a minor event which serves as a 'last straw' to the youth. A low grade may confirm for the youth that life is a failure. An unwitting homophobic remark by parents may be taken to mean that the youth is no longer loved by them. (Gibson, 1989, 3-120).

The *Report* further suggests that lesbian and gay youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual young people. Adolescent suicide has increased threefold in the last ten years (Fisher & Shaffer, 1990).

In a recent study of 137 gay and bisexual males in Seattle and Minneapolis, forty-one of those studied reported that they had attempted suicide (Remafedi, Farrow & Deisher, 1991). Further, almost half of those reporting suicide attempts had made multiple attempts. These youth attributed one third of the suicide attempts to personal or interpersonal turmoil about homosexuality. Moreover, one third of first attempts occurred within the same year that they identified their homosexuality or bisexuality and most of the other attempts took place shortly thereafter.

Historically, sexual orientation has been ignored by researchers as a risk factor for both adolescent and adult suicide. This omission is largely due to homophobia and accompanying strong resistance to open discussions of homosexuality. (Rofes, 1983). What is known, however, is that "An unusual prevalence of suicide attempts and ideation among homosexual persons has surfaced repeatedly as an incidental finding in studies of human sexuality" (Remafedi, Farrow & Deisher, 1991).

C. ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

I have dealt with suicidal thoughts and have dealt with substance abuse but I didn't realize I was bisexual...I don't know how much of a part that use of substances was playing in my emotional problems. I'm sure it had something to do with it, as a teen. Yeah, definitely. BISEXUAL COLLEGE STUDENT.

...a lot of drugs and alcohol were frequently used as it was just very—how we dealt with it I guess. HOMOSEXUAL COLLEGE STUDENT.

Q. Drugs—what role do they play?

“Major role.”

“Major role.”

“Major role.”

I've never met a gay person that hasn't done drugs. UNDER-21 CLUB MEMBER.

Approximately twenty to thirty percent of the adult lesbian and gay male population are alcoholic (Ziebold & Mongeon, 1982, p. 5). The higher rate of alcohol and drug abuse among lesbians and gay men has been correlated with increased suicidal behavior and feelings (Rofes, 1983). Lesbian and gay youth are particularly vulnerable to alcohol and drug abuse as they seek to cope with the isolation, rejection, and stressors they experience.

Substance use often begins in early adolescence when youth first experience conflicts around their sexual orientation. It initially serves the function of reducing the pain and anxiety of external conflicts and easing the internal inhibitions of homosexual feelings and behavior. Prolonged substance abuse, however, contributes to the youth's problems and magnifies suicidal feelings. (Gibson, 1989, p. 3-113).

The information gathered from youth participating in the focused group meetings does not include any specific data on the use of alcohol and drugs by gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. Some of the youth reported chemical use to be the norm among them, yet denied that chemicals played a role in their sexual behavior. The denial—as well as the detrimental consequences—of substance use and abuse in this group of youth is consistent with research on sexual minority youth that has noted “No subjects volunteered substance use as a health concern, although use and abuse was prevalent.” (Remafedi, 1987, p. 334).

The secret and spontaneous nature of youth sexual contacts is frequently exacerbated by drugs and alcohol. Flanagan and Hitch (1986) found that alcohol and other drugs played a role in 43% of initial experiences of intercourse among 125 white, unmarried women. This study found that in only 10% of the initial sexual experiences were the women “ready and willing.” Given the shame many sexual minority youth feel due to their own internalized homophobia, it is probable that the incidence of alcohol and drug use in sexual activity would be at least similar if not greater among young lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth.

D. CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Gay male, lesbian and bisexual youth may experience violence in all areas of their lives: at home and at play; in the schools and their places of employment; and in institutional settings. Sexual minority youth belong to two groups frequently victimized by violent crime: (1) as compared to adults, adolescents are disproportionately the victims of crimes of violence (Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1989); and (2) as a study commissioned by the United States Department of Justice reported, “the most frequent victims of hate violence today are blacks, Hispanics, Southeast Asians, Jews, and gays and lesbians. Homosexuals are probably the most frequent victims. Verbal intimidation, assault and vandalism are the most commonly reported forms of hate violence.” (Finn & McNeil, 1987, p. 2).

1. Violence in the Home

[My mom] hadn't attacked me or anybody that I've ever known before. And then when I told her I was gay, she just kind of flew, you know. GAY MALE YOUTH.

You're not my daughter, you don't love me, you wouldn't have ever of done this to me. She's, like, I don't want to see or talk to you again, you know. LESBIAN YOUTH.

Seventeen year old gay male in a foster placement with a lesbian couple: “After my mom found out I was gay, we had lots of fights. She threw me out a bunch of times; I can't remember how many. During the last fight, the really big one, she took a shotgun and told me to leave. At first I went to a group home, but after three days the caseworker said,

"Casey, there's nothing we can do for you."...[I] walked back home to find all my things thrown out on the street. My mom had changed the locks and everything...I just want to finish high school, go on and finish college, get into a career that I want. And I feel with help I'll be able to do it. (Ricketts & Achtenberg, 1990, p. 95-96).

In a review of the charts of the first five hundred youth seeking services at the Hetrick-Martin Institute (formerly the Institute for the Protection of Gay and Lesbian Youth) in New York in 1988, forty percent (201 of 500) of the predominantly lesbian and gay youth served reported that they had been violently physically attacked. Of those assaulted, 46% reported that the assault was gay-related; 61% of the gay-related violence occurred within the family (Hunter, 1990). These figures are limited to physical assaults only and do not include presumably more common incidents of verbal and emotional abuse.

A recent Chicago murder trial is an example of the extremes of homophobic anti-gay attitudes that led to domestic violence and child abuse. In this case, a four year old boy and his brother were viciously and repeatedly assaulted by their mother's boyfriend as he believed that they were homosexual.

"I saw what they were doing. They were doing things like swishing their butts and screaming like little girls, and snapping their fingers," [the defendant] told a psychiatrist in an interview included in court records.

"I wanted to put him in the cupboard so he wouldn't do these things," Campbell said. "I figured that the pin holes would make him stop." (Tanner, 1990, p. A19).

The two children were tortured over a period of months. The four year old was burned with a hot iron, starved, singed with cigarettes, stuck with pins and needles, tied up for two and one-half months, hung upside down, signed with cigarettes, repeatedly beaten with a variety of implements, and scalded with hot water. The boy died due to a severe blow to the head.

2. Violence in the Schools/Peer Perpetrators

That was the thing that terrified me, everybody talking about how all gay people ought to be killed. WINDFIRE YOUTH.

I was pushed into a garbage can and got stuck. Just several things. Dead things in my locker...But I had had several incidents of violence in high school with just being attacked or people pushing or one of my friends had his head cut with scissors because they didn't like his tail so they cut it off for him and gouged the back of his neck open and he had to have stitches. WINDFIRE YOUTH.

Did they think by pushing me or by doing something that I would say, "Oh, I'm straight, sorry"?" WINDFIRE YOUTH.

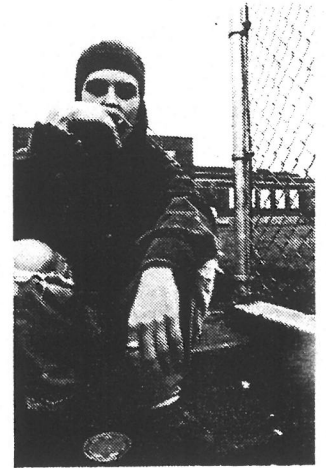
In a survey that studied the bias of teenagers toward a number of different minority groups, the New York State Governor's Task Force on Bias-Related Violence found that teenagers reacted more negatively to lesbian and gay people than to any other minority group.

One of the most alarming findings in this survey is the openness with which the adolescent respondents expressed their aversion and hostility toward gays and lesbians. While racism and ethnocentrism were found to be very much alive among the youth of New York, it was rarely openly advocated. The young people are aware that bias based on race and ethnicity can no longer be overtly condoned. There is no such awareness concerning the rights of gays and lesbians and the students were quite emphatic about their dislike for these groups and frequently made violent, threatening statements.

Gays and lesbians, it seems, are perceived as legitimate targets who can be openly attacked with impunity. In their written comments "a number of students threatened violence against gays." Other comments were "often openly vicious" (Governor's Task Force on Bias-Related Violence, 1988, p. 84). The perception of gays and lesbians as legitimate targets for abuse draws strength from the example set by major social institutions that continue to deny homosexuals the status of equals (p. 97).

3. Violence in Institutions

Group homes, emergency shelters, residential treatment facilities, and juvenile detention facilities can be dangerous places for sexual minority youth. Rape is a common form of violence against lesbian and gay youth in institutions. Lesbian and gay youth in institutions are frequently blamed by administrators for the fact that an assault occurs. They may be accused of "flaunting" their sexual orientation. Simply acknowledging one's sexual orientation may be viewed by some as "flaunting." A frequent institutional solution is to expel the victim from the facility or isolate the victim from others rather than to confront the perpetrators and address the issues of homophobia.



E. HOMELESSNESS/STREET LIFE

Gay and lesbian youth are often thrown out of their homes by their families when their homosexuality is discovered. Given the frequent dramatic rise in family conflicts upon learning that a child is homosexual, adolescents often run away from home. Some lesbian and gay adolescents also find street life preferable to shelter or group homes, or other placements perceived to be unsupportive of sexual minority youth.

In a 1989 survey of Portland street youth, participants were asked with whom they primarily have sexual relations. Of the 107 completed questionnaires: (1) 70% indicated that they primarily have sex with the opposite sex; (2) 11% primarily have sex with their same sex; and (3) 9% said with either sex (Johnson, 1989). Further, in a 1986 survey of Seattle street youth 40% of respondents identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (Seattle Commission on Children and Youth, 1988).

F. TEENAGE PROSTITUTION/SEXUAL ABUSE

I remember hearing people that are prostitutes...you look at it from their positions, they seem to think they have no other way, and they're trapped in that way of life.

HOMOSEXUAL YOUTH.

Many teenage prostitutes are runaway or "throwaway" homeless youth. For example, twenty percent of the youth seen by staff of New York's Institute for Gay and Lesbian Youth are homeless and runaways. The majority of these youth have been "thrown away" or rejected by their families upon learning of their child's sexual orientation (Hunter & Schaefer, 1990). Motivations for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth engaging in prostitution include obtaining money (Coleman, 1989), shelter, food, drugs, alcohol, or physical or emotional security (Martin & Hetrick, 1988).

Gay male youth are at serious risk of sexual abuse and exploitation in a number of settings. Gay male youth are socially isolated and may be obsessively concerned with their sexual orientation in their efforts to maintain their secret. This concern with sexual orientation may be transformed into a focus on sexual activity when they learn that they can "make contact" with others in certain parks, movie theaters, or highway rest areas. "The casual sexual contact also helps to maintain hiding, as it becomes a means to compartmentalize his life and to separate sexual behavior from all other aspects of his life" (Martin & Hetrick, 1988, p. 171).

G. TEENAGE PREGNANCY

It's a cold, wet December day as she walks down the city streets. Her stomach growls as the small life within her cries out for food. She is 18-years-old, gay, pregnant from a rape five months ago. She is alone on the streets.

That girl was me a little over a year and a half ago. Being a gay street youth isn't very easy. It's even more difficult if you're pregnant. Why not abort? I couldn't. It wasn't my child's fault that I was raped. That left me two choices. Keep it or give it up for adoption. Reality caved in on me fast enough that I knew I couldn't raise my baby on the streets, which left me only one choice—adoption.

Not long after I hit the streets, I heard about an organization which helps street youth called Outside In. While I was there I came in contact with a staff person. After answering several newspaper ads for the adoption of my child, I became very discouraged. All the people I had contacted told me that they either didn't want my child because I was gay or because I was a street kid. I was told that one or both of these traits were probably genetic. The staff person then asked me if I had thought of giving my child to gay parents. With a growing excitement, I told her that I hadn't. She made a few phone calls. One hour later, a lesbian couple called and we made plans to meet for dinner.

After talking to them for a couple of hours, we agreed that we'd get to know each other better and possibly even make them the proud parents of a newborn baby. The months that followed weren't easy ones. Outside In gave me an apartment for 90 days to help me get on my feet. During that time, I went through four false labors. Labor, whether it be false or real, is extremely painful. There was concern all around that the child wouldn't make it to the due date alive.

My transitional housing was coming to an end as I entered my seventh month. The parents and I arranged for another apartment to carry me through until a month after the baby's birth....My son was born on April 29 at 2:35 am. After spending three days with him, I signed the papers and handed him to his new parents. He is now 15-months-old and in a very happy lesbian home.

Looking back, I realize how lucky I was during my pregnancy. Without resources like Greenhouse for food and Outside In for shelter, my stay on the streets could have been much more difficult. There was also great support from the lesbian community. Many hands carried me through that rough time and continue to do so. (Silver, Just Out, 1990, p. 10). 18 YEAR OLD LESBIAN.

Pregnancy among teenage lesbians is not uncommon. For some youth, pregnancy is a method of concealing their sexual orientation. "They recognize that the family will accept an unwanted pregnancy more easily than a lesbian daughter" (Martin & Hetrick, 1988 p. 169). Other young lesbians feel pressured by their peers or families to date members of the opposite sex and experience accidental pregnancies (Hunter & Schaecher, 1990). Lesbian youth are likely to be undersocialized with respect to the development of dating skills for either heterosexual or homosexual dating. Young lesbians living on the street may also engage in prostitution to support themselves and become pregnant.

H. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Oregon's lesbian, gay and bisexual youth—like their heterosexual peers—are at risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases including chlamydia, gonorrhea, human papilloma virus (genital warts), syphilis and herpes (D. Harger, Oregon Health Division, personal communication, June 17, 1991). Of greatest concern is their risk of acquiring the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). To date, 210 Oregonians between the ages of 20-29 have developed AIDS. This represents 19% of all Oregonians with AIDS (L. McAuliffe, Oregon Health Division, personal communication, June 17, 1991). This suggests that significant numbers of adolescents are engaging in unsafe sexual activities. This is likely due in part to the clandestine nature of their sexual activities and fear of discovery.

Youth are less likely than adults to be knowledgeable about the possible consequences of their behavior or to have information about safe-sex methods (Zenilman, 1988). Although gay male teenagers are at increased risk of exposure to the HIV virus, they may benefit more than other population groups from exposure to HIV/AIDS-prevention educational programs as

"[M]any are sexually inexperienced and not entrenched in patterns of high-risk behavior. Thus, they face greater risk than other heterosexual teenagers; but, compared to gay adults, they are less apt to be already infected and possibly more amenable to adopting healthy sexual practices" (Remafedi, 1988 p. 140).

Successful HIV/AIDS educational programs reach youth both within and without school systems by reaching into youth shelters, teen clinics, youth groups, and public places where youth gather, and by working to enhance self-esteem and positive identity (Remafedi, 1988).

I. RURAL LIFE

When I was growing up in Grants Pass, being gay and out pretty much in high school meant that you got to have your choice of nice pretty little gravestones, according to all the other kids. That was one thing that terrified me, everybody talking about how all gay people ought to be killed. RURAL GAY YOUTH

I'm suicidal. I tried to commit suicide once about a year and a half ago, and ever since then I've been passively suicidal. I have thoughts every now and then. I think it had to do with the town that I was living in. I was still struggling with my sexuality and I just felt alienated from all the other farm kids. So I think that's a way that it had to do with being gay. GROUP MEMBER.

Sexual minority youth living in a rural environment experience the same pressures urban lesbian, gay male, and bisexual youth face. These stresses are, however, exacerbated for rural youth. These youth are geographically isolated and are even less likely to find supportive role models than their urban peers. Rural youth have a more difficult time identifying peers struggling with sexual orientation issues, lack access to support networks, and are less likely than urban youth to find gay-positive materials in their libraries or schools.

IV. IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONS: SCHOOLS, RELIGION, AND FAMILIES

A. SCHOOL

I dropped out of one high school and then dropped out of another. HOMOSEXUAL YOUTH.

We have all these other tons of counseling groups at our school for every other problem you could imagine, but that. Not that it's a problem, but it's really hard to meet people my age. And like nobody wants to talk about it. It's like so they don't even—they can have counseling groups for anything except that. And I think that would help a lot just so you could sort of, I mean, sort of identify with who else was. PORTLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.

I came out to a teacher in school, and a few months later she started acting strange. She told me things like I wasn't a good student, that I was dumb, and stuff like that. I don't know if this is because I came out to her or not, but it wrecked my self-esteem.

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP MEMBER.

I think if anybody is different, they call them faggot or they call them dyke or whatever. WINDFIRE YOUTH.

You know, like I said, I never felt like I could go to them for help. When we had school dances, they would lock the library, and I asked them to change that policy because I didn't want to go to the dance. All my friends were at the dance, so I wanted to go study. You know, they unequivocally said no. I think it would have been really different if it was my Islamic friend who was being harassed, you know, for being a Muslim, or if my Islamic friend had said, "In my religion we're not allowed to dance with guys, I'd like to be able to study." LESBIAN WINDFIRE MEMBER.

I always feel extremely alienated at high school, like I just don't fit in. I come from another universe, that's the way I always feel. PORTLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.

If you were different in high school, you were going to get it regardless...One thing I would like to see is mandatory homophobia training for all teachers and a hate crimes policy...if you can make the high schools a safer place for people...LESBIAN COLLEGE STUDENT.

I think a lot of gay kids tend to drop out more often. GAY MALE YOUTH.

Adults are uncomfortable with adolescent sexuality in general let alone minority sexuality issues only furthering the incredible isolation of dealing with such feelings. School based clinics seem a very productive outlet for outreach to these youth, however, until as a society we can be more comfortable with "deviations from the norm" and the continuum of sexual expression, there is no way to pretend to these youth that all is well. Peer support groups seem vital for validation and socialization to reduce the isolation.

MULTNOMAH COUNTY YOUTH PROVIDER.

In schools across the country, even very young children learn the codes, passed on in joking whispers: don't wear certain colors to school on a particular day, or you're 'queer.' Lessons are learned each time a child discovers that one of the surest ways to deliver an insult is to accuse another of being a lezzy, a faggot, a sissy. Children may not always know what these words mean, but they know the pejorative power of this language; they know it is meant to belittle others. (Whitlock, 1989, p. 2).

Gay and lesbian youth are at high risk for dropping out of school and for truancy (Whitlock, 1989). Two of the most important needs adolescents share are the need to be accepted by their peers and the need to be a member of the group (Hunter & Schaecher, 1990). Instead, many lesbian and gay youth find themselves socially isolated and alone. They may drop out or avoid school and receive low grades. Alternatively, gay or lesbian youth may immerse themselves in school ac-



tivities and in their studies as a way of demonstrating that they are too busy to date. They may also succumb to peer pressure and date members of the opposite sex. In any event, they experience tremendous stresses to maintain their secret and conform to the expectations of their peers (Hunter & Schaecher, 1987).

Nowhere are [the] harshly negative attitudes towards homosexuality more pronounced than in junior high and high school. These institutions are the brutal training grounds where traditional social roles are rigidly reinforced. Boys are going to play sports and drink beer with the guys. Girls are going to start paying more attention to their physical appearance in the hopes of attracting boys. Adolescence will be the last stronghold of these stereotyped roles and behaviors because young people are looking for identity. Homosexuality and gender nonconformity are threats to many youth and an easy target for their fears and anxieties about being 'normal.' (Gibson, 1989, p. 3-117).

When students, teachers, or counselors learn that an adolescent is homosexual, the youth are often not physically or emotionally protected from verbal or physical abuse within the school setting. Lesbian and gay youth may experience abuse not only from their peers, but also from teachers and counselors. Where anti-gay incidents arise, the lesbian or gay youth is often blamed. Lesbian and gay youth are discriminated against in the area of student activities.

School authorities have waged bitter fights against attendance by lesbian/gay couples at dances, proms and other social events and activities. When courageous young people have applied for formal recognition of gay/lesbian student organizations, their applications have often been summarily dismissed. Such actions deny to lesbian/gay groups the access to school facilities and funds enjoyed by other student groups (Whitlock, 1989 p. 16).

Academic curricula typically do not address homophobia or the contributions made by sexual minorities. Nor do health curricula include lesbian, gay male, and bisexual health concerns. Few school libraries include gay-positive works. Moreover, gay or lesbian school administrators, teachers, and counselors may risk their jobs if their sexual orientation is disclosed to students.

University settings are also unsupportive of sexual minority students. A 1990 report, *Creating Safety, Valuing Diversity: Lesbians and Gay Men in the University. A Report to the President of the University of Oregon*, summarized the results of a questionnaire completed by 105 lesbian, gay and bisexual students: (1) 57% described the campus environment as unaccepting of them; (2) 69% indicated that they have been pressured to remain silent about their sexual orientation while at the University of Oregon; (3) 96% had heard jokes and slurs about lesbians, gays and bisexuals on campus; (4) 86% had observed derogatory graffiti; (5) 61% fear for their safety due to harassment on campus of gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals; (6) 54% reported that they have been verbally threatened or harassed at the University due to their sexual orientation; and (7) 78% of those who had experienced harassment did not report the incidents to community or campus authorities.

B. RELIGION

I had been raised that homosexual meant evil and you were automatically condemned to hell, so I couldn't handle living in a world where no matter how good of a person you were, you were condemned never to have a happy life because you were different. It was really, really hard. It was both sexuality and religion. I know there are churches that will accept gay people, but I wish they'd be a little bit noisier about that fact. I mean I value my religious background very much, but through what feels like no choice of my own, I feel very alienated from it. When I asked a member of my church if they thought it was possible to be gay and Christian, their resounding answer was no. It would have been really nice to have somebody pop up and say, "that isn't necessarily true." My church isn't virulently homophobic; they're not pro-gay either in reality. I just wish that I had known earlier on that there was a divergence of opinion even within the Christian mainstream...I've had real, real positive experiences with the gay churches. Everybody's been really, really friendly, much more than any time I've gone to any other church. And that, even though I don't agree with their beliefs and I'm not a Christian, they've always made me feel welcome. WINDFIRE MEMBER.

Religious beliefs form an additional barrier for many lesbian, gay male, and bisexual youth struggling to acknowledge their sexual orientation. The followers of a number of Judeo-Christian religious groups have cast sexual minorities as shameful, immoral sinners. Alternatively, they have viewed gay males, lesbians, and bisexuals as objects of pity or in need of therapy or forgiveness (Whitlock, 1989).

The best case scenario for a gay or lesbian person in most Judeo-Christian denominations is to be treated as invisible, with one's orientation merely whispered about but never openly mentioned, and the worst case scenario is to be excommunicated or ostracized. These sacred communities that purport to instill and inspire faith for gay men and lesbians often contribute to the shattering of their faith, the further fragmentation of self, and the derailing of their journey toward self-actualization. (Ritter and O'Neill, 1989, p. 11).



C. FAMILIES OF LESBIAN AND GAY YOUTH

I told my mother I was gay when I was 16 in my high school counselor's office. He was like a go-between for us. I told him I was gay and I kind of thought at the time that I was ready to tell her. So he said, "Well, if you want we can have a conference and you can tell her here in my office and, you know, I would be there and stuff." So I told my mom. I was really nervous. I just remember that she was saying, she kept insisting that I was a real man, because I guess she thought I wasn't flaming enough to be gay, although I never really try to be butch or femme, just me. So I just told her. My sister said she cried for two weeks. She was disappointed, I'm sure...My mom eventually came around and she didn't hate me. Now she more or less accepts me. We just don't really talk about it.

FILIPINO-AMERICAN GAY MALE YOUTH.

I will not tell my dad for a while. I just can't. Not my dad. No way. YOUNG GAY MAN.

I have a real positive story. Actually sometimes I feel guilty about my positive story. I came out to my sister when I was 17. She's been wonderful. It's just extraordinary. I came out to my dad, and he's now very involved in PFLAG [Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays]. GAY YOUTH.

My mother's first response was that I could die and that we could no longer spend eternity together...spiritually I had died for her. And that has not changed. MALE COLLEGE YOUTH.

Families of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth often may react with fear that they are to blame and are somehow responsible for their child's sexual orientation. They may respond with denial and argue that their child is simply "going through a phase" or deny the significance of their child's orientation. "Like others in our society, [parents] have been taught that gay people are sick, despicable, trivial, and dangerous, that homosexuality is one of the most shameful conditions known to man." (Martin & Hetrick, 1988, p. 175).

The families of lesbian and gay youth have special needs. These families go through their own "coming out" process as they recognize their child's sexual orientation. Family members must cope with the stigma of homosexuality that attaches to the family. They need education and information that dispels stereotypes and myths about homosexuality, as well as information about community resources and parent support groups (Coleman & Remafedi, 1989).

D. FOSTER CARE/ADOPTIONS

Sixteen year old lesbian in a foster placement with a lesbian couple: "Maybe a third of us that hung out on the street together were gay. A lot of them left home because their parents threw them out - 'You're gay, that's a curse, get out.' They treated it like a disease or something.

But a lot of gay kids would have problems because they wouldn't want to go into a straight [foster] home, so they didn't go anywhere. They'd say, either I get into a gay home or a shelter where I can be freely gay, or I'll stay out here.



But after several months of going from shelter to shelter, you want to say forget it, I'm not ever going to find a home, I'll make it on my own. I finally decided it was time for me to go into a straight group home, see how it was there and if I didn't get along, I'd just leave. And I did go and I saw what everybody was afraid of. It was very homophobic. They watched everything I did. They made me sign an agreement not to touch any other girl in the home. They totally blew the subject out of proportion.

I didn't even have to tell them I was gay, but I thought it was only fair. I thought, I must be truthful to myself, and say that I'm gay and that no one can change me. Because they were always saying shit like, 'Oh, do you have a boyfriend?' and 'Do you need birth control?' So I just said, 'Look, let's just drop all this. I'm gay. I don't need that stuff.'

When I moved in with Arna and Kris [her current foster parents], I didn't know at first if they were going to be friends to me or just foster parents. Because I've had foster parents where it's like, we'll give you a place to live and all, but if you have any problems, solve them on your own. But Arna and Kris, they're more friends. They treat me like I'm theirs, like they had me. Their parents call me their grandchild. It's wonderful living here. I kind of enjoy telling other people, 'Well, I have two mothers.' I would want them to adopt me if they could." (Ricketts & Achtenberg, 1990, p. 97).

One frequently overlooked area in examining adolescents who experience multiple foster care placements or in reviewing disrupted adoptions among older youth, is the role played by sexual orientation issues (Ricketts & Achtenberg, 1990). Sexual minority youth in need of out-of-home placement may experience significant difficulties when placed in heterosexual foster or adoptive homes. If a heterosexual family can be identified who is willing to accept a homosexual child, the child may still experience—from the new family—tremendous pressure to conform to heterosexual mores.

Agencies *should* consider a parent's sexual and emotional adjustment, along with all other factors, in determining the suitability of a particular home for a particular child. When *every* placement in *every* lesbian or gay family is judged to be traumatizing for *every* child, however, prejudice has eclipsed concern for children's best interests (Ricketts & Achtenberg, 1990, p. 88-89). (Emphasis in original).

Lesbian and gay youth can find a level of acceptance in homosexual families that they cannot find elsewhere. Most importantly, adolescents in lesbian and gay foster or adoptive families can benefit from their exposure to positive adult role models.

E. CHILDREN RAISED IN LESBIAN OR GAY FAMILIES

It doesn't seem like I have two moms. I just call them my parents, because they are my parents....I think it would be helpful if everyone who was gay and lesbian could be out and not have to worry about being discriminated against and not have to worry about being beat up or have their house burned down or anything like that. To me, discrimination against gays and lesbians is the same thing as being racist. I hate racists and I hate racism and I hate discrimination. 19 YEAR OLD SON OF LESBIAN PARENTS.

Telling people just didn't seem like it would be right. When I was younger, it was abnormal. All these people had a mother and father and their little cute family, and mine seemed so different that I thought maybe, you know, it would just be a total shock and bad things would happen or something...A lot of people have either started rumors or just made the assumption that I was gay...I'd like for it to just become a normal thing. Having gay and lesbian rights, I wouldn't like it to be looked down upon because I don't think that's fair or right or anything. It would help the children out a lot, I think, just to have it—instead of saying, "Your mom or dad is a what?," as some people look at it, have it just be okay and stuff. 16 YEAR OLD GIRL.

I just wish that I had a life like everybody else so I wouldn't be made fun of all the time...I'd like them just not to make fun of me, just act like it's perfectly normal, my life would be

totally different...I just act like I'm normal. I don't act like I have gay parents or anything...Well, I mean, there's nothing unnormal about me. I'm perfectly normal, it's just unusual having a lesbian mom. 7 YEAR OLD BOY IN A LESBIAN HOUSEHOLD.

Llana Lloyd, the founder of a Los Angeles organization entitled Children of Gays, estimates that six million children have lesbian or gay parents (Schulenberg, 1985). Approximately ninety percent of these children are heterosexual. Gay and lesbian parents may have children from previous heterosexual relationships, adoptions, foster care, alternative insemination or other arrangements. Children raised in gay or lesbian families face special challenges because of the homophobia they encounter. Many children feel very different from their peers. They are concerned with maintaining secrecy about their parents' homosexuality, and often feel isolated and separate from their friends. As one eleven year old said, "It's living a lie" (Lewis, 1980, p. 199). Children living in lesbian and gay families are frequent targets of taunting by their peers. They may feel uncomfortable about inviting other children into their homes. Moreover, visits to the homes of friends and others



...may be fraught with similar anxieties because there is always the possibility of being asked prying questions about one's family. For those children, especially adolescents who may be experiencing normative developmental difficulties, the added problems attendant to living in a gay stepfamily can at times cause confusion, depression, and even open rebellion when they are unable to adapt and cope with the secrecy necessary to living in [many] such families. (Baptiste, 1987, p. 231).

The concern with secrecy is primarily an issue with early adolescent children who may be struggling to establish whether their own sexual orientation is the same or different than that of their parents.

V. NEEDS FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT

A. ROLE MODELS

I just wished I could have figured it out earlier so I could have gotten on the road of figuring out the social skills . . . It's harder when you get to college and you go, "Wait a minute. Let's start over again and relearn the skills because you don't have those models as you're growing up." LESBIAN COLLEGE STUDENT.

"I can remember my junior and senior year I had a couple of really great teachers who, if they heard a homophobic comment would call people on it . . . And then it made me start thinking right then, 'Well, maybe this is not a problem, it's just the way I am.' And I can remember every single teacher who did that." MALE COLLEGE STUDENT.

"I didn't know a single openly gay person." GAY MALE YOUTH.

Q. What do you think it would have been like if you had teachers who were out?

"I would have come out a lot earlier."

"It would be somebody to talk to."

"I might have had a better scholastic experience up until this point." COLLEGE STUDENTS.

Heterosexual youth are exposed to positive heterosexual role models at home, in the schools, on television, and in books. Role models for sexual minority youth are very hard to find. As most institutions where young people spend time, such as schools, community centers, clubs, and teams, do not promote tolerance and understanding of sexual minorities, professionals—heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual—often avoid discussion about lesbian, gay and bisexual people and issues. Many sexual minority staff members choose to perform their jobs "in the closet," rather than risk losing their jobs or support at work.

B. SOCIALIZATION/RECREATION

"[J]ust the idea that there's someplace I could go where I didn't have to be of legal age to buy alcohol where I could meet a whole range of gay people."

"There's really few options and places for people who are under 18. It's very limited."

"There's Windfire, and that's two hours out of a week."

"And you can't dance at Windfire." YOUTH AT UNDER-21 CLUB

It's like we don't get this kind of training because when you're in middle school, all the kids start flirting with the other sex, and if you feel like you're gay or bi or whatever, if you feel like you're attracted to someone of your own sex, you really can't do that unless you're playing football and you're being macho and everything and you slap someone on the butt. But we really don't get the opportunity to learn how to flirt with other people, not till we're much older. I just kind of felt like I was thrust into all this stuff so quickly. GAY MALE ADOLESCENT.

Heterosexual youth have opportunities to learn social and dating skills at dances, sports events, outdoor organized activities, and in a wide range of other settings. In contrast, gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth lack settings in which to develop and refine their same-sex socialization skills. Heterosexual adolescents learn that dating is a process that may ultimately include sexual activity; gay male youth, on the other hand, often begin with sexual activity and thereafter attempt to develop a relationship (Martin, 1982).

[T]here must be a concerted effort to provide gay adolescents with the opportunity to have meaningful social environments in which they can develop their personal and social skills free from fear of exposure and censure. These environments can range from rap groups to ordinary social activities (Martin, 1982, p. 63).



The socialization of heterosexual youth occurs everywhere—from school halls to shopping malls. Similarly, sexual minority youth need safe settings such as reading or video groups, structured outdoor activities, dances, and other recreational activities; as well as support groups facilitated by adults to develop their same-sex socialization abilities.

C. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

"They have good books, but they're not on the shelf, they're on the stacks. Yeah, I'm going to ask for this book from the stacks, uh-huh."

"And say I'm doing a book report for school."

"I was so nervous. One of the first things I did, I came to the library, was looking up books in the card catalog. I had trouble looking in the card catalog. I almost had a heart attack when I found out they weren't on the shelves in the back, they were on one of the shelves on the reading table."

"And I think that's something I wanted to comment on was about books in libraries. That's how I found out a lot about being gay. When I first started wondering, I did a research paper on lesbianism, so it was sort of...safer. That's when I found out a lot of things."

GAY YOUTH.

...if we can get gay books in we can at least make sense...that they get some good books, some books printed after 1950. COLLEGE STUDENT.

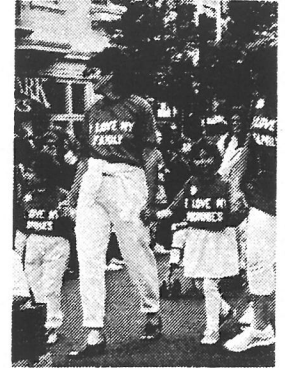
Access to accurate information about gay, lesbian and bisexual youth is a key need of sexual minority adolescents. All youth grow up hearing derisive remarks about lesbian, gay and bisexual people in movies, books, television, school, and other settings. They learn to keep quiet about struggles they may experience concerning their emerging sexual orientation. Isolated from their peers, with no insights available from adults, sexual minority youth often turn to books for information.

Libraries are an invaluable source of informative materials for sexual minority youth. In addition to the information a book, magazine, newspaper or videotape may provide—perhaps more importantly—appropriate materials can offer hope, reassurance, and the knowledge that they are not alone. Gay, lesbian and bisexual youth need access to such information in public, junior high and senior high school libraries. Materials should be current and readily available to youth on open stacks.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Oregon's sexual minority youth are an unrecognized and unserved at-risk population. Many of these youth (1) feel isolated from their peers and others; (2) lack information about what it means to be a healthy and productive lesbian, gay, or bisexual person; (3) lack appropriate role models; and (4) experience disruptions in their adolescent development as they do not have the opportunities to date and socialize that their heterosexual peers enjoy. Moreover, shame or confusion about their same sex affectional orientation can lead to drug and alcohol abuse, inappropriate sexual acting out with the same or opposite sex (which may result in unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases), serious depression and suicide. Further, lesbian, gay and bisexual youth may experience intimidation and harassment due to their sexual orientation from peers as well as from figures of authority and may—for the same reason—be rejected by their families. As a consequence of this alienation or rejection, some sexual minority youth live on the streets and exchange sexual favors for food, shelter, or money. While most lesbian, gay and bisexual youth emerge as healthy adults from the struggles associated with adjusting to a stigmatized and reviled minority status, their journey is lonely, uncharted and unsupported by families, friends, neighbors, service providers and others.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth receive services from multiple systems including education, child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice, and health. Typically, these service providers have neither identified nor addressed the special needs of this population. Neither schools nor other youth-serving agencies have policies, programming, or staff training designed to address the needs of sexual minority youth. Accordingly, Oregon's lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth do not receive appropriate services.



A. YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth group participants identified a variety of actions service providers may undertake to support sexual minority youth.

Provide information about sexual diversity. Sexual minority youth lack knowledge or information about their emerging sexual orientations. Educators and other providers should initiate discussions and provide information. Books addressing lesbian, gay and bisexual youth should be readily available in public, junior high and high school libraries. Curricula in the schools should present a broad range of sexual expression as normal and healthy.

Provide support. Sexual minority youth need to know that they are not alone. Peer support groups should be developed in the schools and other community settings.

Address homophobia. Institute policies that prohibit discrimination against sexual minority youth and incorporate these policies into disciplinary codes.

Educate youth-service providers. Conduct staff development trainings to educate youth-service providers to the special needs of sexual minority youth and their families as well as to provide information on how to access local resources.

Provide positive role models. Educate youth about historic and current lesbian, gay and bisexual people and their contributions. Institute non-discrimination personnel policies to support and protect openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual teachers, counselors and other youth-service providers.

Provide social opportunities. Provide safe environments where youth may socialize. Sexual minority youth need community-wide social and recreational activities as well as school or agency-based social opportunities.

Assist families. Offer supportive services to families struggling with their children's sexual orientations. Provide gay and lesbian foster and adoptive families for sexual minority youth.

B. TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force made three overall recommendations: (1) Promote public policies that protect against discrimination, assure equal access to services and provide accurate and relevant information; (2) Educate the community, service providers, youth and families regarding issues facing sexual minority youth and regarding available resources; and (3) Advocate for services that permit all young people to develop to their full capacity free from harassment and victimization.

Individual case, organizational and systems level changes are required to ensure the provision of appropriate services to sexual minority youth. Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth members are available to consult with agencies and organizations as providers begin to examine how they can best serve lesbian, gay and bisexual youth.

1. Individual Case Level

- Individualize the services provided to each child (i.e. do not attempt to make individuals “fit” existing services; instead identify, develop and provide services that fit the specific individual).
- Actively involve youth in the development of their service plans.
- Identify supportive adults (family, friends, neighbors, teachers and others) from each youth’s personal community and involve those individuals in the development and provision of services.
- Provide supportive services to family members (information, support groups, telephone “warm line” contacts with other families of sexual minority youth, counseling, out-of-home youth placements coupled with family reunification efforts).
- Openly discuss matters of concern to gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth.

2. Organizational Level

- Enact personnel policies that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Enact agency policies that demonstrate the organization’s commitment to serving sexual minority youth and families.
- Include sexual orientation non-discrimination clauses in all contracts the organization enters into with other providers.
- Place lesbian, gay and bisexual youth and adults on agencies’ boards of directors, advisory groups and other decision-making bodies.
- Provide staff training on sexual diversity.
- Include sexual minorities as a targeted population within training designed to promote culturally competent practice.
- Assure that the organization is a “safe place” for staff and youth to openly acknowledge their sexual orientations.
- Examine the success of outreach and service delivery efforts to sexual minorities in program evaluation activities.
- Institute policies and practices to prevent young clients from harassing or victimizing other youth on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Display gay-positive books, magazines, brochures and posters in public service areas (for example: schools, teen health centers, youth service centers) and in professionals’ bookcases.
- Place large print posters that provide information on resources for sexual minority youth in strategic locations.
- Establish linkages with local lesbian and gay service organizations.
- Identify lesbian, gay and bisexual professionals within the local community who are available to consult on specific cases involving sexual minority youth.

- Establish linkages across systems (child welfare, education, health, mental health, juvenile justice, recreation, vocational services) to address the needs of sexual minority youth.
- In written materials published by the agency, identify sexual minority youth among the population served.
- Provide a statewide telephone hotline (especially helpful for rural youth) and 24 hour a day crisis services for sexual minority youth.
- Provide alcohol and drug-free supportive social opportunities such as rap groups, dances, video clubs, athletic events, and other outdoor activities for sexual minority youth so that they may meet others like themselves and develop effective relationship skills.
- Recognize and address the abuse of some sexual minority youth by their families.
- Celebrate Gay Pride Week each June.
- Revise student rights and responsibilities handbooks to include protections for sexual minority youth.
- Support sex education and HIV prevention education for all youth and revise curricula to include appropriate, relevant information for sexual minority youth.
- Infuse junior high and high school curricula with accurate and positive information about sexual diversity.
- Make books (fiction and nonfiction), magazines, pamphlets, and videotapes addressing lesbian, gay and bisexual topics available on open shelves (not closed stacks) in public, junior high and high school libraries.
- Develop and disseminate annotated bibliographies of available books and other holdings that address sexual minority issues for library patrons.
- Select qualified lesbian and gay families to serve as foster parents.
- Develop independent living programs for sexual minority youth.

3. Systems Level

- Establish public policy protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation through enacting federal, state, county, and city civil rights legislation and drafting appropriate administrative rules.
- Promote interagency collaboration efforts on behalf of sexual minority youth (such as through the development of flexible funding strategies).
- Develop public policy positions that support the foster care or adoptive placement of sexual minority youth in approved sexual minority households as well as the development of specialized foster and group home placements for sexual minority youth in need of out-of-home care.
- Infuse the curricula of professional schools (such as social work, nursing, psychiatry, psychology, and education) with information on sexual diversity.
- Include knowledge and skills about serving sexual minority youth in professional licensing standards.
- Eliminate heterosexual bias in research.
- Conduct multidisciplinary research on issues relevant to the welfare of sexual minority youth (e.g. topics such as coping strategies of emerging lesbian, gay and bisexual youth; impact on families following the disclosure of a child's sexual orientation, and the role of sexual orientation in depression and suicide).
- Foster discussion within religious communities on sexual minority issues.
- Promote the development of gay-sensitive editorial policies among print, audio, and visual media (such as the use of inclusive language and announcements of events taking place within sexual minority communities).

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VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

POLICY POSITIONS OF NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Association for Counseling and Development

1987. AACE asserts that all persons are entitled to live and participate freely in society regardless of their racial/ethnic groups, sex, age, disability, creed or sexual/affective orientations...The Association is resolved to continue to promote human rights through...(3) Encouraging counseling services and programs based on the unique qualities or characteristics of these underserved populations, incorporating their sexual/affective orientations, values, identity development and world views...(6) Encouraging legislation affecting the rights, opportunities and protection of these different groups...AACD calls on each member to recognize that human rights cannot be actualized or achieved through laws and policies alone, but rather through a sincere desire and willingness of individual members to serve all persons to the best of his/her ability regardless of differences that may exist between them..."

American Federation of Teachers

1970. ...the American Federation of Teachers protests any personnel actions taken against any teacher merely because he or she practices homosexual behavior in private life.

1979. ...the AFT supports amendment of the federal laws relating to job discrimination to include discrimination because of sexual preference.

1988. ...the AFT reaffirms its opposition to discrimination on the basis of sexual preference.

American Psychiatric Association

1973 Position Statement on Homosexuality and Civil Rights:

Whereas homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities, therefore, be it resolved that the American Psychiatric Association deplores all public and private discrimination against homosexuals in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodation, and licensing, and declares that no burden of proof of such judgment, capacity, or reliability shall be placed upon homosexuals greater than that imposed on any other persons. Further, the American Psychiatric Association supports and urges the enactment of civil rights legislation at the local, state, and federal level that would offer homosexual citizens the same protections now guaranteed to others on the basis of race, creed, color, etc. Further, the American Psychiatric Association supports and urges the repeal of all discriminatory legislation singling out homosexual acts by consenting adults in private.

(The American Psychiatric Association is, of course, aware that many other persons in addition to homosexuals are irrationally denied their civil rights on the basis of pejorative connotations derived from diagnostic or descriptive terminology used in psychiatry and deplores all such discrimination. The resolution singles out discrimination against homosexuals only because of the pervasive discriminatory acts directed against this group and the arbitrary and discriminatory laws directed against homosexual behavior.)

1986 Council on Children, Adolescents, and Their Families of the APA:

The Council on Children, Adolescents, and Their Families of the APA finds that the available research and experience show that single factors (e.g. being a single parent, homosexual, or elderly) should not necessarily or automatically rule out selection of a potential foster parent.

American Psychological Association

'1975. The APA deplores all public and private discrimination in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, and licensing against those who engage in or have engaged in homosexual activities and declares that no burden of proof of such judgment, capacity, or reliability shall be placed upon these individuals greater than that imposed on any other persons. Further, the APA supports and urges the enactment of civil rights legislation at the local, state, and federal level that would offer citizens who engage in acts of homosexuality the same protections now guaranteed to others on the basis of race, creed, color...Further, the APA supports and urges the repeal of all discriminatory legislation singling out homosexual acts by consenting adults in private.

1976. The sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation of natural, or prospective adoptive or foster parents should not be the sole or primary variable considered in custody or placement cases.

1981. ...the American Psychological Association protests personnel actions against any teacher solely because of sexual orientation or affectional preference.

1988. Whereas...the APA opposes prejudice and discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or physical condition. Therefore be it resolved that the APA condemns harassment, violence, and crime motivated by such prejudice. Be it further resolved that the APA encourages researchers, clinicians, teachers, and policy-makers to help reduce and eliminate hate crimes and bias-related violence.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

1990 Resolution:

Recent studies indicate that some students experience discrimination and harassment because of their sexual orientation. ASCD believes that schools should demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of all students and that all students should be treated equitably. ASCD opposes discrimination and supports policies and programs that promote equity.

Therefore, ASCD urges its members to develop policies, curriculum materials, and teaching strategies that do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. ASCD encourages schools to provide staff development training and materials to enable educators to better work with this at-risk student population. Finally, ASCD encourages its members to collaborate with other professional organizations toward this goal.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

1979 NASW Code of Ethics:

The social worker should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or status.

1977 NASW Public Social Policy Statement on Gay Issues:

The National Association of Social Workers realizes that homosexuality has existed under varying circumstances, throughout recorded history and in most cultures. A substantial number of women and men in American society are identified with a lifestyle that includes homosexual behavior. Homosexuality may properly be considered a preference, orientation, or propensity for certain kinds of lifestyles. Millions of men and women, whose sexual orientation includes homosexuality, are subject to severe social, psychological, economic, and legal discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

NASW views discrimination and prejudice directed against any minority as inimical to the mental health not only of the affected minority, but of the society as a whole. The Association deplores and will work to combat archaic laws, discriminatory employment practices, and other forms of discrimination which serve to impose something less than equal status upon the homosexually-oriented members of the human family. It is the objective of the social work profession not only to bring health and welfare services closer to people, but also to help alter the unequal policies and practices of health and welfare institutions.

NASW affirms the right of all persons to define and express their own sexuality. In choosing their own lifestyle, all persons are to be encouraged to develop their individual potential to the fullest extent possible as long as they do not impinge upon the rights of others.

National Educational Association

The NEA believes that personnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, or retired because of race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, residence, physical disability, political activities, professional association, activity, age, marital, status, family relationship, sex, or sexual orientation. The NEA believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should be afforded equal opportunity within the public education system.

1988. Resolution C-11, adopted by NEA Representative Assembly. "The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should be afforded equal opportunity within the public education system. The Association further believes that every school district should provide counseling for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation.

APPENDIX B: OREGON RESOURCES FOR SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

Ashland/Medford/Grants Pass

- Lesbian and Gay Hotline — 773-8146 7-11pm
- MCC Church, Medford — 770-7966
- PFLAG, Ashland — 482-4017

Bend

- The Other Side, *Gay and lesbian social activities* — 388-2395

Coast

- Central Coast Network, *social networking group for gays & lesbians*, PO Box 351, Depoe Bay, OR 97341
- Coos Bay, *Switchboard/Hotline*, PO Box 4212, Coos Bay, OR 97240 — 269-4183

Corvallis

- Community Outreach — 758-3000
- Corvallis Men's Group — 757-1980
- Gay & Lesbian Association — 737-6363
- Lesbian Brunch — 757-0155
- Our Night Out, *Gay/Lesbian social group* — 754-9623

Eugene

- Alpha & Omega Christian Fellowship, *Evangelical gay/lesbian outreach* — 485-5136
- Bisexual Women's Discussion Group — 683-2914
- Cascade Athletics, *Lesbian/gay sports* — 343-6745
- PFLAG, *Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays* — 689-1630
- Gay, Lesbian & Bi-Sexual Youth Group, *for people 21 years old and under*. Meets Mondays 6-7:30pm — 346-3360 or 683-CHAT
- Gay & Lesbian Helpline, *Events, resources, counseling* 4pm-8pm, also 4-10pm M-Th for TDD 683-2428 (683-CHAT)
- Metropolitan Community Church, *outreach to gays and lesbians* — 345-5963
- Mother Kali's Bookstore 343-4864
- Men's Forum 345-5595

Klamath Falls

- Klamath Area Lambda Association, *activities, info* PO Box 43, Klamath Falls, OR 97601

Roseburg

- Gay & Lesbian Alliance (GALA), PO Box 813, Roseburg, OR 97470 — 672-4126
- Gay & Lesbian Community Center — 679-9144
- Gayline - 24 hours, *counseling & referrals* — 672-4126

Salem

- The Capitol Forum, *social service organization* - PO Box 813, Salem, OR 97308 — 672-4126
- The Bean Scene, *Lesbian Newsletter*- VLO Committee, PO Box 663, Salem, OR 97308 — 363-2774
- Dignity, *Lesbian/Gay Catholic outreach* — 363-1084
- MCC Church, *Lesbian/Gay positive church* — 363-6618

Statewide

- Oregon AIDS Hotline 1-800-777-AIDS

PORTLAND RESOURCES FOR SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

Helplines

- Phoenix Rising, 620 SW 5th, Suite 710, PORTLAND, OR 97204 — 223-8299
Lesbian and gay service center. Information and referrals to places gay people frequent, gay positive doctors, counselors, and other professionals, and groups for lesbians and gays. Phoenix Rising also provides counseling services, sponsors Windfire (see below) and other leisure/social activities. (M-F 9-5)
- Gay and Lesbian Helpline — 683-CHAT (Eugene)
Community events info., resources and referrals, peer & crisis counseling (4pm-8am)
- Metro Crisis, Crisis counseling, some referrals (24 hrs.) — 223-6161
- Alcohol and Drug Helpline — 232-8083 (Statewide) — 1-800-621-1646
- Youth Line — 233-1113 (3-5 Mon-Fri)
Referrals to self-help groups and treatment centers for alcohol and drug abuse
- Oregon AIDS Hotline — 223-AIDS 1-800-777-AIDS (Statewide)
Information and referrals regarding the HIV virus. (10-9 M-F 12-6 S,S)

Bookstores (with Lesbian/Gay sections)

- Catbird Seat Bookstore, 913 SW Broadway — 227-5817
- Ladd's Editions, 1864 SE Hawthorne Blvd. — 236-4628
Ladd's Editions also has a lending library and carries lesbian and gay music.
- Looking Glass Bookstore, 318 SW Taylor — 227-4760
- Powell's, 1005 W Burnside — 228-4651
- Cascade Plaza Beaverton — 643-3131

Restaurants

The following restaurants have a diverse clientele, carry gay papers, and tend to have information on lesbian and gay community events and organizations

- Old Wives' Tales, 1330 E Burnside — 238-0470
- Cup and Saucer Cafe, 3566 SE Hawthorne — 236-6001

Nightclub

- City Nightclub, 13 NW 13th — 244-CITY
All ages predominantly gay dance club

Newspapers

- *Just Out*, PO Box 15117, Portland 97215 — 236-1252
Monthly Portland area gay/lesbian paper
- *The Lavender Network*, PO Box 86416, Eugene, 97405 — 485-7285
Monthly statewide gay/lesbian newsmagazine
(Both these papers are available at the bookstores and restaurants listed above. Many organizations also have their own newsletter.)
- *The Advocate*
National bi-weekly gay newsmagazine. Available at local bookstores. In the Multnomah County Central Library and the Portland State University Library.

Radio and TV

- KBOO 90.7 FM — 231-8032
Bread and Roses-Tuesdays 9-10pm — *Feminist/lesbian public affairs program*
Womansoul-Fridays 10pm-1am — *women's music*
Detour - Wednesdays 4-4:30pm—*International gay/lesbian public affairs show*
51% - Wednesdays 3:30-4:00 — *A show about women and society*
- Nightscene - "*Gay TV for everyone.*" Airs Tuesdays at 11:30 pm on Ch. 11 (Paragon, TCI, and Columbia Systems), Ch. 49 (Jones Cable) or Ch. 38 (Washington County)

Groups and Organizations

These are just a few of the groups and organizations in the Metro area. For information on other groups, look in Just Out or The Lavender Network or call Phoenix Rising, the Gay and Lesbian Helpline, or Lesbian Community Project.

- Oregon Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Campus Union, P.O. Box 4935, Portland, Oregon 97208 — 236-2597
Referrals to college organizations statewide
- Lesbian Community Project, PO Box 5931 Portland 97228 — 223-0071
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gay Men (P/FLAG) — 233-5415
Provides love and support for all family members and friends of lesbians and gay men. Meets fourth Wednesdays, Augustana Lutheran Church, NE 15th and Knott
- Live and Let Live Club, 527 SE Pine — 231-3760
Lesbian and gay 12 step program meetings. (Alcoholics Anonymous, ACDA, Al Anon, Overeaters Anonymous, Incest Survivors Anonymous, etc.)
- Northwest Gender Alliance — 292-2806 or 774-8463
Social activity group for transvestites/crossdressers and transsexuals.
- Rose City Gender Center — 292-0391
A peer support group for people with gender identity concerns (transsexuals).
- Windfire — 223-8299
Social/support group for people under 21 who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or unsure. Meetings are small and informal. Meetings are Thursdays, 7-9pm in the meeting room of the Multnomah County Central Library, 801 SW 10th Ave.
- Bisexual Community Forum — 236-7234 (Nita) or 721-1919 (Andrew)
Informal discussion group and social network for bisexuals, their friends, lovers, and supporters, and those in transition.
- Park Avenue Social Club — 244-3225
Weekly gay rap and social support group for gay men 18-29 year old. Meets Tuesdays, 7:30pm, First Congregational Church, SW Madison and Park. (Not church affiliated.) (Use Madison entrance and ring the bell.)

Religious and Spiritual Groups

(Many of these organizations are local branches of national groups. If you live in another area, these groups may be able to put you in contact with a branch in your area.)

- Affirmation/Mormon — (205) 696-9396
Support organization for lesbian and gay Mormons, their families and friends
- Dignity, St. Francis Church, SE 12th and Pine St.
Support group for lesbian and gay Roman Catholics, their family, and friends. Mass and social third Saturdays, 7:30 pm
- Evangelicals Concerned — 654-4597
Organization for Christian gays and lesbians
- Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian and Gay Concerns — 236-2830 (Bill)
Organization for lesbian and gay Unitarian Universalists and their families and friends
- First Unitarian Church, 1011 SW 12th
Unitarian Universalist church. Congregation has made a commitment to accepting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. Services are Sundays at 9:30 and 11. (Summer services at 10:30)
- Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns — 223-2426 (Bob) or 282-4961 (Mary)
Quaker spiritual support group
- Journey Catholic Community, SW 13th and Clay Mass on Sundays 6pm
- Living Communion Church, 3830 SE 62nd Ave. 10am and 6pm, Sundays
- Lutherans Concerned/North America — 227-5431
Association for lesbians and gays
- Metanoia Peace Community — 281-3697 (John, Pat, Ann, or Bruce)
United Methodist Church welcomes gay men and lesbians. 5:30pm Sundays
- Metropolitan Community Church of Portland — 281-8868
Christian church open to all people
- Metropolitan Community Church of the Gentle Shepard — (206) 253-8401
Christian church with very positive/supportive outreach to the lesbian and gay community
- Reach Out — 657-0620
A support group for gay and lesbian former Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons

- The Sacred Band, Box 13072, Portland, OR 97213
A spiritual brotherhood for gay and pagan men
- SDA Kinship — 244-0286
A fellowship group for lesbian and gay Seventh Day Adventists
- Sister Spirit — 294-0645
Women sharing spirituality. Wheelchair accessible.
- United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns — 760-4745
For lesbians, gays, bisexuals and their families
- United Methodists for Gay Lesbian Concerns (Affirmation) — 692-9019 (Dick)
Meets monthly for potlucks and fellowship

The City Nightclub

LANNY SWERDLOW

Business address

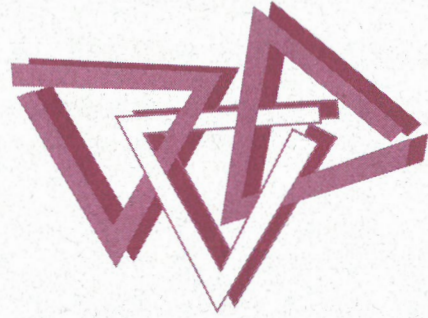
13 N.W. 13th
Portland, Oregon 97209

Corporate address

1525 S.E. 33rd Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97214

(503) 224-CITY

(503) 239-0760



LESBIAN, GAY & BISEXUAL YOUTH

EMERGING INTO THE '90s

A discussion with and about sexual minority youth,
their issues and concerns
for educators, youth service providers
and everyone that cares about young people.

April 23-24, 1992

**Greenwood Inn
Beaverton, Oregon**

With the advent of the sexual revolution and the gay liberation movement of the past two decades, gay and lesbian youth have been increasingly aware of their feelings and coming to terms with their orientation at an earlier age than ever before. This has placed them into direct conflict with all of the traditional childrearing institutions and support systems of our society. Increasingly, this occurs while the youngsters are still living at home with their family, attending public school and developing a sense of their own self-worth in comparison with their peers and the expectations of society as a whole.

Gibson, P. (1989). Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide. In M. Feinleib, (Ed.), Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide (pp. 3-110). Washington D.C.; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Sponsored by:

Chemeketa Community College · Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Campus
Union · Phoenix Rising Foundation · Multnomah County, Youth Program Office ·
Oregon Health Division · Portland Community College · Task Force on Sexual
Minority Youth

PRESENTERS AND MODEL PROGRAMS

Christopher T. Gonzalez is co-founder and current Director of **IYG**, a social support and educational program offering a wide range of activities designed to provide healthy choices for gay and lesbian youth under the age of 21. For the last five years, **IYG** has focused its efforts on reinforcing self-esteem and positive health behaviors. **IYG** was founded in Indianapolis and has successfully started 10 chapters in cities across Indiana. **IYG** has been nationally recognized by *Time*, *NBC News*, *20/20*, and *The Advocate* and is supported with funding from the Federal Center for Disease Control, the Indiana State Board of Health and the United States Conference of Mayors. In addition to his work with lesbian, gay and bisexual youth, **Mr. Gonzalez** has implemented central Indiana's comprehensive program for hispanic youth and was selected by *New Times* as a "Local Hero" for his work with youth.

Pepper Schwartz Ph.D. has been on the Sociology faculty at the University of Washington since 1972 and currently serves as Special Assistant to the Provost. Her professional affiliations include the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, of which she is currently President, and the NIH Research Review Panel on AIDS. **Dr. Schwartz** serves as Advisory Editor of the *Annual Review of Sex Research*, and Associate Editor of the *Journal of Sex Research* and of the *Journal of Family Issues*. She is the author of five books and numerous articles including: *Gender and Intimate Relationships* (co-edited with Barbara Risman), and *American Couples: Money, Work, and Sex* (with Philip Blumstein).

Virginia Uribe Ph.D. is a veteran teacher and counselor for the Los Angeles Unified School District, having been at Fairfax High School since 1959. While studying for a degree in psychology, **Dr. Uribe** became interested in the treatment of adolescent homosexuals in the public school system and created **Project 10** with a focus on education, reduction of verbal and physical harassment, and integration with other dropout prevention programs. In its nearly six years of existence, **Project 10** has affected the lives of thousands of lesbian and gay youth. **Dr. Uribe** speaks regularly in seminars geared toward educating both school counselors and educators on the subject of sexual orientation. **Project 10** has no precedent and serves as a national model for other schools and school districts.

Scholarships for Youth

The conference planning committee has made a commitment to the involvement of youth in this event. We are offering a limited number of full tuition scholarships to enable them to attend. If you know of a young person 14-20 years old who would be interested in attending, please contact Greg Asher at (503) 399-5197.

Production of this program is
made possible by a generous grant from :
Equity Foundation
and
Portland General Electric



THURSDAY AGENDA April 23, 1992

7:30 - 8:30 - Registration and Morning Hospitality

8:30 - 9:10

A Personal Welcome Gail Shibley, Oregon State Legislator

Getting Here : Warming Up Claudia Webster, Oregon Health Division, HIV Program

9:10 - 10:00

Gay Youth and Same-Sex Sexuality in America: Identity and Behavior in the 1990's Pepper Schwartz

In this sociological overview of gay, teenage sexuality, Pepper Schwartz will discuss general issues of teenage sexuality; the "state of the nation" on gayness, with special consideration of the formative years; the different issues for young male and female populations; and the change, or lack of change, in the behavior of young gays.

10:00 - 10:20 - Break

10:20 - 12:00

Homophobia/Heterosexism: Definitions and Explorations Peggy Hackenbruck M.D., Psychiatrist in Private Practice, Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists; Dan Stutesman, Director, Lesbian and Gay Program - American Friends Service Committee

This workshop will blend information and discussion with direct participation to facilitate participant understanding of and personal reactions to homophobia and heterosexual bias.

12:00 - 2:00 Lunch

Sex Education in the Public Schools: A Contemporary Quandary Matthew Prophet, Superintendent - Portland Public Schools

2:00 - 5:00

"We're Here, We're Queer - Get Used To It": New Attitudes Toward Identity and Coming Out Greg Asher, Social Science Department - Chemekata Comm. College; and a panel of youth led by Brooke Gelfand, Student - Oregon State University.

After defining the five sexual minority communities that are generally included under the umbrella of sexual minorities, the presenters will explore our concept of the "closet" and review the developmental stages that are associated with the process of "coming out." Using edited videotape from discussions held last summer with youth 15-21 years old, they will encourage participant involvement as they examine contemporary variations on the process of self-identification and coming out.

EVENING BANQUET/GALA

6:30 Evening Banquet

7:30 Entertainment

Bridges is a choral ensemble of lesbians and gay men committed to exploring similarities and differences; humor, passion, and commitment; and to life affirming ideals through the creation of music together. Initially formed from members of The Portland Lesbian Choir and Portland Gay Mens' Chorus, Bridges is now in its second year. This active, witty and challenging group will share music from their recent concert production, "Myth America."

8:15 Documentary Film

FRIDAY AGENDA April 24, 1992

8:30 - 8:45 Greetings and Housekeeping

8:45 - 9:45

***Gay and Lesbian Youth: A Population at Risk* Virginia Uribe**

In this address, Virginia Uribe will outline the special needs of lesbian and gay young people and discuss how their needs intersect with our educational system. She will confront the educational system's failure to provide support for this group of young people, challenging all to develop a plan to remedy the homophobia that stands in the way of permitting these young people to be a more vital and productive part of the educational domain.

9:45 - 10:15 Break

10:15 - 11:30

***IYG - Reaching Out to Gay and Lesbian Youth: The Indiana Approach* Christopher Gonzalez and young people from IYG**

During this session Christopher Gonzalez and young people of IYG will highlight the risk factors facing lesbian, gay and bisexual youth and explain the strategies that IYG has developed to assure that these young people have safe and supportive places to socialize and to grow. The young people will discuss their involvement with IYG and the benefits they have gained from their participation in this model program.

11:30 - 12:00 Time to Visit the Resource Fair and Book Sale

12:30 - 1:30 Lunch

The Heart of the Matter: Understanding, Compassion, and Being Real

Judi McGavin, Director - Harry's Mother

1:30 - 2:45 Breakout Sessions

This small-group time is designed for more specific discussions and to encourage interaction with presenters on a more personal level. Topic options include:

Project 10: Virginia Uribe

IYG: Chris Gonzalez

Issues Facing Youth of Color

HIV and Sexual Minority Youth

The Climates on College and University Campuses

A Gathering for Young People (Option limited to youth)

2:45 - 3:00 Break

3:00 - 4:30

***Responses, Conclusions, and Looking to the Future* Moderator: Mimi Luther, HIV Education and Resource Coordinator - Cascade AIDS Project; Panelists: Delegates from "A Gathering For Young People" and the youth of IYG will be joined by Virginia Uribe and Chris Gonzalez,**

During this session the young people who have been attending the conference and the keynote speakers will respond to the discussions of these last two days. This will be a time to put closure on the conference and discuss the strategies we are formulating as we look forward to returning to our communities and to our work.

REGISTRATION FORM

Last Name _____ First _____

Address: _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Social Security # _____

Organization or affiliation (if any) _____

Job Title _____

Fees:

Conference Tuition \$75.00

Optional-Thursday Evening Banquet/Gala \$25.00

Total \$ _____

Payment:

Check or money order

Purchase Order:# _____

Bank Card:# _____

Expiration date _____

Signature: _____

Make check payable to: Chemeketa Community College

Mail registration form and payment to:

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Conference

Chemeketa Community College

P.O.Box 14007

Salem, Oregon 97309

For **hotel accommodations** contact the Greenwood Inn at **1-800-289-1300**. If you make reservations before **April 9, 1992**, mention that you will be attending this conference to be eligible for their conference rate of \$59.00 for 1-4 occupancy.

A limited number of **participant scholarships** are available. For information about how to apply, contact **Loretta Slaughter** at Oregon Health Division **(503) 731-4029**.

For **general information** on the conference, contact **Greg Asher** at **(503) 399-5197**.



Printed on Recycled paper

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Conference
Chemeketa Community College
P.O. Box 14007
Salem, Oregon 97309

Proposed Sexual Minority Youth Task Force Executive Presentation to The Honorable Neil Goldschmidt, Governor

Children and youth are the human potential of the State of Oregon.

Education and primary prevention programs directed toward youth are among Oregon's most strategic and vital investments in our future.

Newly emerging data on *gay/lesbian/bisexual youth* (hereafter called "*sexual minority youth*"), identify these youths as among our most marginalized and abused citizens. They show:

- Sexual minority youth are 3 to 12 times more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual peers. They comprise at least 30% of teen suicides annually. 40% of sexual minority citizens have seriously considered suicide, mostly during adolescence; 20 - 25% actually attempted suicide.
- These youth are 6 times more likely to abuse alcohol, and 4 times more likely to abuse other substances.
- Perhaps 20% of persons with HIV disease (AIDS) were teenagers when they contracted the infection. Among teens, HIV is transmitted through sexual activity twice as often as through needle sharing. Youth are the most rapidly growing victims of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Nationally 25% of young gay males are forced to leave home because of conflicts over their sexual identity. As many as 40% of street youth are sexual minority youth.
- Although accurate data is limited, sexual minority youth are probably the most frequent victims of verbal intimidation, assault and vandalism.
- Sexual minority youth are at disproportionate risk for physical abuse, school attrition, school failure, chronic depression, relationship conflicts, and social withdrawal.

These statistics indicate that despite urgent need, the issues of sexual minority youth are not being adequately addressed in Oregon.

Therefore, a statewide Governor's Task Force on Sexual Minority Youth should be appointed as soon as possible. This task force should be charged with examining the issues facing sexual minority youth in Oregon. They should formulate a public response including suggestions for legislative and administrative interventions, and recommendations for action by public agencies. The Task Force should be comprised of leading Oregonians from the academic, religious, medical, educational, political, and social service professions. Sexual minority youth and their parents, and representatives of the gay and lesbian communities should be included. The Task Force should be structured and instructed to report **prior to 1991.**

Information for this Summary was drawn primarily from:
Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, 1989.

Report on gay and lesbian youth in Seattle, Seattle Commission on Children and Youth, 1988.

Journal of Counseling and Development, special issue on gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues, Sept/Oct 1989.

Response of the Criminal Justice System to Bias and Crime; U.S. Dept of Justice, 1987.

Vital Statistics for 1988, Oregon Health Division, Jan. 1990.

DRAFT cc:

John Baker
Terry Bean
Keeston Lowery
Judy Chambers
Bev Stein
Gretchen Kafoury
Steve Fulmer
Greg Asher
Cathy Siemens
Fred Neal

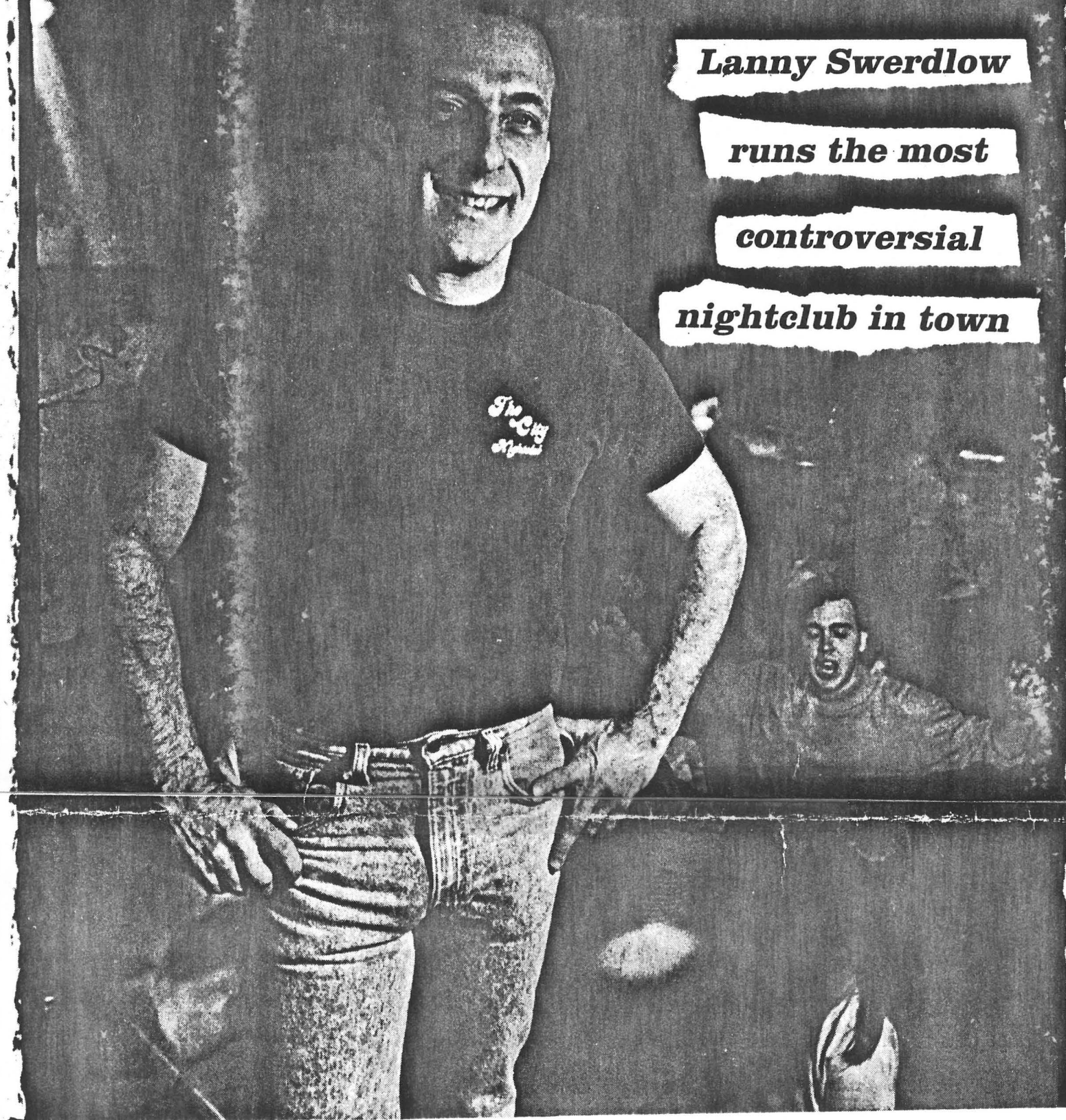
SAINT OR SINNER?

Lanny Swerdlow

runs the most

controversial

nightclub in town



Willamette Week

**January 18 —
January 24, 1990**

By Jim Redden

EVERYONE who knows Lanny Swerdlow has strong feelings about him.

Swerdlow, 43, is the co-owner of the City Nightclub, an alcohol-free, all-ages dance club at 13 NW 13th Ave. The club's clientele is composed largely of homosexual teen-agers, and it also attracts a sizable number of street kids who have few other places to hang out. In addition, Swerdlow is the co-host of *NightScene*, a gay- and lesbian-oriented television talk show taped at his club and shown on local public-access cable channels.

Because of these activities, some people view Swerdlow as a good Samaritan who understands the problems such young people face. According to a 1986 study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, gay and lesbian youth "are two or three times as likely to attempt suicide as others." Keeston Lowery, an outspoken gay aide to City Commissioner Mike Lindberg, calls the club a "real service" to young gays and lesbians who have no other place to gather. And Margi Dechenne, the program director of the Salvation Army's Greenhouse youth shelter, thinks Swerdlow has exerted a positive influence on

many street kids. "I hear nothing but good things about Lanny," says Dechenne, who notes that some parents have thrown their children out of the house simply for being homosexual.

Other people take a different view, however. Since the club opened in March, it has routinely attracted fundamentalist Christian protesters who throw holy water at the front door. And some nearby property owners, including the Blitz Weinhard Brewing Co., have complained to the city that the club attracts large, unruly crowds, especially during the summer months—prompting Swerdlow to hire a security guard to chase loiterers away.

But Swerdlow's most serious critics belong to the Portland Police Bureau. On the evening of Dec. 14, more than a dozen uniformed officers raided Swerdlow's club. The police were accompanied by four supervisors from the city's Bureau of Buildings, a city fire marshal and two inspectors from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

According to Chuck Bolliger, an officer with the Police Bureau's Drugs and Vice Division, the raid was prompted by numerous complaints from parents of young people who frequent the club. Bolliger says the parents alleged that some of the teen-agers engage in sex at the club and that illegal drugs are openly sold there. The police detained approximately 100 customers inside the club during the

raid and photographed many of them. After searching approximately 10 customers, the police arrested three on charges of possessing illegal drugs. They also arrested a volunteer security guard on a charge of selling drugs to an informant.

The raid was one of the largest in city history, involving more employees from more government agencies than were present when the Club Macombo, a nude dancing establishment at 117 NW 2nd Ave., was shut down in December and its owners hit with civil racketeering charges. But Swerdlow's problems aren't over yet. Since the Dec. 14 raid, city building inspectors have visited the club on two separate occasions, asking Swerdlow to correct numerous minor code violations. And some customers complain that uniformed police officers have stopped them outside the club to warn them against entering it.

The most serious problem may be still to come, however. According to police Sgt. Rick Mosiman, the city is considering shutting the City Nightclub down under Portland's Specified Crime Property Ordinance, better known as the Drug House Ordinance. "We are considering use of the ordinance, because of the number of complaints and narcotics violations we are aware of at that location," says Mosiman.

Among other things, the ordinance allows the city to seize the assets of anyone who allows drugs

to be sold on his property. Swerdlow is "making money exploiting those kids," says Bolliger. The officer doesn't believe Swerdlow is a drug dealer but does suspect that he allows drug sales in his club to increase attendance.

Swerdlow adamantly denies all of the allegations. He says that sex is not allowed in the club, though he adds that some of his younger customers frequently take free condoms from an AIDS-prevention display near the coat room, blow them up as a joke, and leave them on the dance floors or in other rooms. Swerdlow also says he has worked hard to keep drug dealers out of his club and to prevent them from hanging around outside. "I had come to the conclusion that if there was a drug problem, it was under control," says Swerdlow, who insists he was shocked to learn that one of his volunteer guards may have been selling drugs.

The police scoff at Swerdlow's denials, but there are a number of legitimate reasons that he might feel his business has been unfairly singled out by the city. To begin with, it is not unusual for illegal drugs to be sold at any of Portland's all-ages dance clubs—according to Dechenne, a lot of the street kids who come to the Greenhouse shelter say illegal drugs are sold at all four of the clubs currently operating in the downtown area. And illegal drugs are also available at clubs that serve liquor. "If the

police were to raid my club, I think they'd probably find that 25 percent of them are holding, maybe more," says the owner of one popular downtown establishment, who asked to remain anonymous.

In addition, the city does not have a policy of trying to shut down every nightclub where people are arrested for selling illegal drugs. For example, several employees of the Club 927 were arrested for possession and distribution of cocaine Aug. 10. That business, located at 927 SE Morrison St., has not been threatened with closure.

Moreover, in the months before the raid, Swerdlow repeatedly asked the city to identify any problems occurring at his club. In early August, the police asked the Oregon Liquor Control Commission to deny the City Nightclub's request for a one-day liquor license for an adults-only function. That action prompted Swerdlow to write three letters to the city asking to be notified of any problems that were thought to exist at the club. The first two went to Portland Police Capt. Gary Schraeder, who is in charge of the bureau's Central Precinct. The third was mailed to Christine Tobkin, one of Mayor Bud Clark's executive assistants. No one responded to the letters before the raid. Officer Bolliger says the Police Bureau didn't answer Swerdlow's letters because "He was just trying to cover his ass."

Craig Colby, Swerdlow's attorney, disagrees. Colby says his client has tried to work with the city but has been repeatedly harassed by the police. Swerdlow has owned a number of all-ages nightclubs aimed at young gays and lesbians over the past 12 years and has successfully fought with the police over several of them. For example, the police used to arrest Swerdlow's underage customers for violating the curfew. In 1978, he convinced the city attorney to issue a formal opinion that said his customers were not breaking the law against staying out late as long as they were in the club. Two years

later, Swerdlow was beat up outside one of his clubs by several police officers. He filed a complaint with the city and was paid \$2,000 in compensation for the incident. ("Police Story: Whitewash," W.W., Nov. 18, 1980). Then, in 1987, the police searched Swerdlow's house for drugs, finding two small marijuana plants in his back yard. Because the total amount was less than an ounce, Swerdlow got off with a \$100 fine, as allowed by Oregon law. "I think they've been out to get me for a long time," the club owner says.

Swerdlow also suspects that the police have targeted his club because of its homosexual clientele. In the letter written to Tobkin shortly before the raid, Swerdlow charged, "I would guess that what we are dealing with is some homophobic police officer who is convinced that Armageddon is occurring within the walls of the City Nightclub."

Bolliger denies that the sexual orientation of Swerdlow's customers has anything to do with the city's attempt to shut his place down. At the same time, it is clear that at least some people are bothered by the presence of gays and lesbians there. One parent who visited the club's upstairs dance floor described the scene to Bolliger as "demonic." And, Bolliger says, an undercover informant told him before the raid that "males were dancing together with loincloths, humping each other's legs." The informant characterized that activity to Bolliger as "bizarre."

Swerdlow and Colby say they will fight the closure threat. They are also considering suing the city. According to Colby, the police may have unlawfully detained, searched and photographed a number of the club's patrons during the raid. "The state can't keep drugs out of the prisons," says Colby, referring to revelations that have emerged during the investigation into the killing of state corrections chief Michael Francke. "How can they expect club owners to do any better? They can't catch the guilty, so they're trying to punish the innocent." •