

Homophobia

What is Homophobia? Homophobia is an irrational fear of homosexuality or homosexuals. Homophobia leads to discrimination.

Examples of Homophobia:

- Thinking you can "spot one"
- Jokes about "fags" or "gays"
- Changing your seat because a gay/lesbian sat next to you
- Thinking if a gay/lesbian touches you, they're making advances toward you.
- Being outspoken about gay rights, but making sure everyone knows that you are straight.

What effects does homophobia have?

- Homophobia causes a loss of productivity in school and/or the workplace.
- Homophobia causes self-hatred and low self esteem for many gay and lesbians, which can lead to failure and suicide.
- Homophobia causes people to live in fear. It fosters threats and harassment.

Homosexuality

What is Homosexuality? Homosexuality is a sexual attraction primarily to members of the same sex.

Why are people homosexual?

No one knows for sure why people are gay/lesbian. Studies have shown a person is born this way.

Do people choose to be homosexual?

People do not choose to be homosexual. No one would choose to be rejected by family and friends, victims of hate crimes, etc.

Is Homosexuality a mental illness? No. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the Association's list of mental disorders.

What determines a person's sexual orientation? It is not known what causes homosexuality. One's sexual orientation is established by a very early age. Many gay and lesbians sensed something different about themselves by the age of four or five. Most acknowledge their homosexuality between 14-16 for males and 16-19 for females.

Can one's sexual orientation be changed?

Sexual orientation cannot be changed. You cannot change a homosexual into a heterosexual anymore than you can change a heterosexual into a homosexual. In some cases the sexual behavior has been changed not the orientation.

Why do they have to flaunt it? A small percentage of homosexuals are radical and want to shock society. Most gay/lesbians just want to be treated equal and put an end to discrimination.

What if they make a pass at me? Someone who is homosexual is no more attracted to you than you are to him or her.

This makes me uncomfortable. Most people fear what they don't understand and rely on what they know or believe. The more you learn about this subject the more at ease you'll be.

Meeting someone who is Homosexual

There are homosexual people in all occupations and in the classroom. So chances are you will know someone who is homosexual in your lifetime.

You may feel uncomfortable because this is a new experience for you. Try to put your views to the side and get to know the person.

You may feel it's wrong because they do not fit into traditional roles. If you can't accept a person's sexuality you still need to get along with this person at work or school.

You may feel threatened or think others will believe you are homosexual. These attitudes come from society and the things we've learned. The more you read about this topic you'll realize these are not things to worry about.

Homosexual people are not easy to identify so you may not even realize you know someone who is homosexual.

How can I be supportive?

- Do not tolerate jokes that put down any group of people.
- Look at the person as an individual and get to know that person.
- Avoid the use of words/terms like "fag", "how gay", "she's such a dyke".
- Learn more about this topic before making judgements.
- Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. By caring you may make a difference in one person's life.

Myths & Facts

Myth: Gay and Lesbian adults are a danger to children

Fact: Most sexual abuse of children outside the family home is committed by a pedophile. Lesbians and gays are no more likely to be pedophile than heterosexuals are.

Myth: Loving people of the same sex is immoral.

Fact: Many religious denominations do not believe this. What is understood by most is that intolerance and hatred are wrong.

Fact: 42% of homeless youth are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Fact: Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youths are four times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youths.

Where can I find out more?

You can contact the following offices for advice:

- Affirmative Programs Office 487-3310 or sikauppi@mtu.edu
- Counseling Services 487-2538
- Keweenaw Pride <http://pride.students.mtu.edu/>
- Safe Place <http://safeplace.mtu.edu/>

Books available from the Affirmative Programs Office:

- [Homophobia](#)
- [On Being Gay](#)
- [Beyond Tolerance: Gays, Lesbians & Bisexuals on Campus](#)
- [Working with GLBT College Students](#)
- [Gay Issues in the Workplace](#)
- [Straight Talk About Gays in the Workplace](#)

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If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against, you are encouraged to file a complaint with the Affirmative Action Officer. The Affirmative Programs Office is located in the Administration Building room 207 or phone 487-3310.

All discussions are confidential. Even if you don't intend to file a complaint, we strongly recommend discussing the situation and getting advice for options.

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What we are Learning About...



**Michigan Technological University
Affirmative Programs Office
487-3310**