



PFLAG NH
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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Is My Son Going to Wear a Dress?

Gender, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation by Stephen M. White, Psy.D.

When parents first learn that a child is gay, one of the most confusing issues can be understanding the concepts of gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. This brief article will describe the difference between these terms and discuss how they are related to each other.

The term "gender" indicates whether someone behaves in a masculine or feminine manner, while sexual orientation refers to whether one is attracted to people of the same sex or the opposite sex. Putting these concepts together, a man may be masculine (gender) and heterosexual (sexual orientation), masculine and gay, feminine and heterosexual, or feminine and gay.

Similarly, women may possess any combination of these qualities: feminine and heterosexual, feminine and lesbian, masculine and heterosexual, or masculine and gay.

Media stereotypes of gay people often portray them as gender atypical: gay men are depicted as feminine, and lesbians are shown to be masculine. This may lead some parents to wonder

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Gay Pride Celebrations

From Sao Paulo to Washington to Hamburg, and in dozens of cities and towns in between, record crowds attended Gay Pride celebrations in June.

The biggest was in Sao Paulo where more than 1.5 million people marched, cheered, whistled and danced. The massive crowd made it the biggest Pride celebration in the world.

Marchers unfurled a 55-yard Rainbow flag as 24 sound trucks blasted techno-pop and disco, to the delight of the crowd. Health ministry workers distributed 50,000 free condoms to the throngs who lined the streets.

Sao Paulo is South America's largest city and the center of Brazil's gay community. Legislation to allow same-sex couples civil unions in Brazil is tied up in the Congress. Nevertheless, they are permitted in the country's southernmost state Rio Grande do Sul.

Gay pride will be celebrated in 22 other Brazilian cities in June and July, including Rio de Janeiro.

In Boston, a record crowd estimated by police at more than 100,000 Saturday celebrated the first pride since same-sex marriage became legal in the state May 17.

This was the 34th annual pride march in Boston, and for many, the most important.

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SILENT AUCTION & Masquerade Event

Saturday, October 23rd

Contact: Elaine M. Rotolo, Executive Director, Southern NH HIV/AIDS Task Force, telephone 603 595 8464; email: erotolo@aidstaskforcenh.org

Nashua, NH ~ The Southern New Hampshire HIV/AIDS Task Force, 111 Lock Street, Nashua, New Hampshire is hosting a special silent auction event on Saturday, October 23, 2004 to benefit people living with or affected by HIV or AIDS.

To make this event a success, the Task Force is seeking corporate sponsorships from community business owners as well as gifts to include as silent auction items. It is hoped that the evening will raise \$30,000. All proceeds will be directed to programs and services that help those living with HIV or AIDS. The funds will be used in two ways. First, to help those living with HIV or AIDS better cope with chronic illness, and second, to support programs aimed at educating the public and raising awareness of how HIV and AIDS can be prevented.

The Silent Auction will take place at Alpine Grove Ban-

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whether their young children are gay if they see their son acting in feminine ways or consider their girl to be a tomboy.

There is some truth to this stereotype. Research on childhood behavior indicates that children who display atypical gender roles often are gay when they grow up. The catch is that this pattern is not seen in all people: not all gay adults showed cross-gender behavior as children, and some children who act in gender atypical ways grow up to be heterosexual.

This same pattern holds for adults: some gay men and women act in gender atypical ways and some don't, although in general gay people are often more comfortable crossing gender lines than heterosexuals are.

Speaking of crossing lines, one of the most worrisome and confusing behaviors that parents wonder about is whether their child may wear clothes ordinarily worn by the opposite sex, referred to as "cross-dressing" or dressing "in drag." Parents of gay sons in particular may wonder whether their son is going to start wearing a dress now that he is openly gay.

While some gay men and women dress in "drag" at times, this is usually done on particular occasions for social commentary or entertainment. Gay communities may hold "drag balls," some of which are depicted in the film *Paris is Burning*, in which gay men (and occasionally women) engage in an elaborate competition for best appearance and performance.

In everyday life gay men usually do not wear highly feminine clothing. It is much more common for lesbians to dress in traditionally male clothes, just as it is more common for heterosexual women to dress in men's clothes than vice versa.

While "cross-dressing" is sometimes used to mean any form of dressing in clothing worn by the

opposite sex, the term more specifically refers to people who cross-dress for enjoyment or excitement, a group formerly referred to as "transvestites."

Interestingly, research on these individuals indicates that most cross-dressers are heterosexual men.

There is another group of people who often dress in the clothes of the opposite sex: transsexuals.

Transsexuals are people whose gender identity, or personal sense of being male or female, does not match their biological sex.

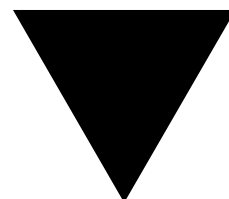
While gay people may dress in drag to make a political statement, and cross-dressers do so for excitement, transsexuals dress in the clothes of the opposite sex simply because they are more comfortable that way. In fact, transsexuals would not consider this dressing as the opposite sex, but rather as dressing as their true sex.

So what can you expect from your child's behavior? Most likely many of the same behaviors you have seen already. If your child was feminine before, he or she

will continue to be so. If your daughter was a tomboy growing up, she will probably retain some masculine traits as an adult. If your child's clothing has always been consistent with his or her biological sex, this is unlikely to suddenly change. Though it can be a shock to learn that your child is gay or transsexual, it is important for you to remember that many aspects of your child's life and personality are the same as you have always known.

Stephen M. White recently received his doctorate in psychology. He can be reached through his website, The-Rainbow-Connection.org.

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"We're not invisible. We're first-class citizens, like everyone else," one drag queen in a wedding dress said. On one float couples in tuxedos and gowns danced to the "Chapel of Love," and tossed rainbow colored trinkets along the route. Marriage was definitely the theme of the parade.

On Sunday, tens of thousands of people in Washington, D.C. took part in the Capital Pride Street Festival on Pennsylvania Avenue between Third and Seventh streets. About a quarter million people gathered along the same route used for President Ronald Reagan's funeral cortege for the annual pride parade. For many it was a fitting statement marking Reagan's ambivalence towards people with AIDS. Washington held its first pride parade in 1981. It was the first year of the Reagan presidency and AIDS was beginning to make its presence known throughout America.

Halfway across the country, thousands marched in Lansing, Michigan. "It's fun to feel like we're the majority once in a while," said Sarah Mieras, spokesperson for Michigan Pride, the group sponsoring the 16th annual rally. "It's extremely empowering for people to feel that they are accepted and loved."

Drawing attention to Michigan laws that prevent gay marriage, 150 couples participated in a symbolic commitment ceremony on the steps of the statehouse. About 15,000 people attended the pride event.

In Cincinnati, marchers, people in wheelchairs, on skates, scooters, bikes, and in cars and on foot rolled from Burnet Woods in Clifton to Hoffner Park in Northside. About 4,000 people cheered them on, clapping and waving colorful flags and balloons.

Thousands were on hand to celebrate Gay Pride in Salt Lake City. The party atmosphere had a distinctly serious note. This November, the issue of gay marriage will be on the ballot here in Utah. The state legislature passed a bill to put the issue to a vote of considering a change to the state constitution to ban same sex marriage.

In Europe, more than 350,000 people crowded into Hamburg, Germany for the annual Europride celebration.

The theme of this year's festival was 'Love Breaks Barriers'. Next year, Europride will take place in Oslo, Norway.

Freedom started here.

In addition to our famous historical sites, Philadelphia and its Countryside has scores of gay-friendly restaurants, clubs, theaters and shops where you will feel warmly welcomed. We invite you to have a great time in the place where all people were given the freedom to live life as they choose. To plan your next trip, reserve a hotel package, or download a brochure, visit getphila.com/gay.

PHILADELPHIA
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Philadelphia Gay Tourism Caucus

PHILADELPHIA'S FIRST HISTORICAL SLEEP OVER

Philadelphia, City of Brotherly Love Launches Gay Travel Campaign

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania (AP) – A new TV ad campaign featuring a same-sex couple in colonial costume invites gay tourists to come to the City of Brotherly Love, and a gay media group said it's the first time a television commercial for a U.S. tourist destination has targeted homosexuals.

The 30-second spot, scheduled to be seen around the country, ends with the tag line: "Come to Philadelphia. Get your history straight and your nightlife gay."

The commercial will play on channels such as Bravo, MTV, VH1 and Style in Comcast Corp. cable markets nationwide. Comcast is the country's largest cable company with 21.5 million subscribers.

"This is an invitation, that you (homosexuals) are welcome here, because of what Philadelphia is and what Philadelphia has to offer, and because we have a strong gay community," said Meryl Levitz, president and chief executive of the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corp., which is sponsoring the ad campaign.

Just a Beginning

An Action Kit for Transgender Youth

Transgender people have been documented throughout history in various societies and cultures. Many communities even created space for individuals who did not clearly fit into male or female gender norms. Sometimes these people were revered or thought to have a special purpose or considered a third sex. Today most societies don't recognize anything but male and female, forcing many transgender people into the margins.

Thanks to the hard work of lots of courageous transgender people and their allies, things are changing, especially when it comes to transgender youth. Many young people are coming out and showing their families and communities that a person's gender is not as simple as checking one of two boxes.

Whether you're transgender or gender non-conforming, just coming out, questioning or simply an ally, this introductory article is designed to help you navigate the world and make your school a safer place. We've included action tools and information to help you advocate for change. So, be proud. Support one another. And organize!

Combating invisibility and isolation you may not have words to describe how you see yourself in the world. Building a community can help give you a voice. While the Internet offers an incredible array of resources, including Listservs, you may have trouble finding community and support offline. The transgender identity is often lumped in with lesbians, gays and bisexuals, without an understanding of its unique differences or any recognition of the need for specific services. Mainstream American culture offers little beyond the stereotypes of the drag queen, sex worker or criminal put forth by the media.

Here's a beginning list of ideas:

1. Form an inclusive gay-straight alliance (GSA). As long as your school accepts public funds and lets other nonacademic clubs meet (and most do) then you have the right to form a GSA. This is one of the most important ways to advocate for transgender issues within your school. (For more information on starting a GSA, see the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) website at www.glsen.org or the GSA Network website at www.gsanetwork.org.)
2. Develop a public education campaign. Train your teachers about trans issues. Start a letter-writing campaign for gender-neutral bathrooms. Hang posters around school.
3. Talk to your friends about transgender issues. Change society one mind at a time. The more people who understand gender difference, the better our schools and world will be for transgender youth.
4. Educate teachers, staff and administrators about transgender issues and the importance of using the name and pronouns that you've chosen for yourself. Consider having speakers share their experiences as transgender youth or adults. Share poems, art, testimony and firsthand stories of being harassed because of your gender expression.
5. If you think a student's confidentiality is violated in any way, ask your school counselor to identify the process for reporting a complaint. If your counselor can't help you then take your problem to the next level (e.g., vice principal, principal, superintendent, school board).
6. Support students struggling with coming out by

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Lesbian & Gay Candidates Vie For White House

Chrissy Gephardt and Keith Boykin threw their pink hats into the political ring Tuesday announcing they are running for President. Gephardt is the lesbian daughter of former presidential candidate Dick Gephardt (D-Missouri), Boykin is an African American gay activist and journalist. They are among 12 "candidates" who will vie for fictional office on a new reality TV show. "American Candidate" will air on Showtime and producers say it will be based on "Survivor" a hit on Showtime's big brother network CBS.

Chrissy Gephardt is a mental health worker who is active in National Stonewall Democrats and worked on her father's bid for the White House. Dick Gephardt dropped out of the race in January.

Earlier this year Chrissy's parents joined PFLAG. In a March speech to the group in Washington Dick Gephardt roasted President George Bush for the president's support of a constitutional amendment to bar gay marriage.

Wave of outings hits Congress Angry activists target closeted members, staffers with anti-gay records

By ADRIAN BRUNE - WshingtonBlade.com
Friday, June 18, 2004

The proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage has revived a debate over the ethics of outing those closeted gay men and lesbians in a position to affect public policy.

On the day after Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) reportedly told Christian leaders that the Senate will vote on the Federal Marriage Amendment in July, well-known D.C. activist John Aravosis issued a call for the names of gay congressional members, staffers and their associates to publicly out them.

"If you're gay and you support making sexual orientation a political weapon, then your sexual orientation is fair game, and you will be outed to the rafters," Aravosis said.

It's a campaign predicted months ago by Steve Gunderson, the former Republican Congressman who came out a decade ago after facing outing threats, and one that other former members of the Austin 12 — the group of gay Republicans who met with President Bush during the 2000 campaign — tried to prevent.

The current political climate and the renewed anger of gay rights advocates has once again forced open the Pandora's box, according to Gunderson.

"I think it will get uglier than anything we saw on AIDS," Gunderson told Newsweek magazine in March. "This country will be more polarized than we've been in decades." He did not return repeated phone calls from the Blade.

Aravosis's battle cry comes two weeks after another vocal activist, Mike Rogers, started phoning closeted gay aides at the offices of congressional members who backed the FMA. He began by urging them to come out in an effort to persuade their members to change their stance on the contentious amendment.

Proponents of outing, however, remain undeterred. They continue to assert that outing is the most effective and quickest way to win converts to the cause, however forceful it may be.

*Adrian Brune can be reached at
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holding a support/discussion group or staffing a peer helpline. (For more information, see NYAC's website at www.nyacyouth.org.)

7. Start a safe-zone sticker campaign designating transgender-friendly teachers, administrators and bathrooms. (For materials, contact NYAC at the address or email listed in "Resources.")

8. Learn whether your state or school district has antibullying laws or programs. Create a forum for antiviolence discussions with other students, or work with a teacher to have an assembly program focused on antibullying that could include guest speakers.

9. Make sure transgender students are included in school nondiscrimination policies and in student handbooks. (For more information, check out the GLSEN website at www.glsen.org.)

10. Preventing Violence

You have the right to be open and honest about your gender identity at school without being teased, harassed or subjected to violence. Unfortunately, statistics show that this right is too often violated. Some schools blame the victim for bringing on negative attention by acting differently. All students are not the same. You have the right to fight for the free expression of gender differences at your school and not be discriminated against for it.

*Adapted from: T. Aaron Hans, "Words We Speak, Words We Tweak: A List of Gender Terms,"
<http://www.riseconsulting.org> (2003).*

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quet Facility located at 19 South Depot Road, Route 111A in Hollis, New Hampshire. Tickets are \$35 for the evening which includes entertainment, hor d'oeuvres and family style dinner. Corporate sponsorship levels begin at \$2,500 which include a full page advertisement and table for 10; \$1,500 for a half page advertisement and table for 10; and, \$1,000 for a quarter page advertisement and table for 10.

Please consider making a contribution or attending this special evening in honor of those who've suffered with HIV or AIDS disease and to help the Task Force better serve clients of all ages, ethnicities and sexual orientation. For more information, contact the Southern New Hampshire HIV/AIDS Task Force at (603) 595-8464.