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Report

**The Governor's Task Force on Gay and
Lesbian Minnesotans**

August 1995

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Primary Recommendations	3
Chapter 1: Rationales for Primary Recommendations	5
Chapter 2: Youth*	9
Chapter 3: Greater Minnesota: Climate and Access*	13
Chapter 4: State Agencies: Education and Training n GLBT Issues	19
Chapter 5: Minority Groups	21
A. Persons of Color*	
1. African Americans	
2. American Indians	
3. Asians	
4. Latinos/Latinas	
B. Persons with Disabilities*	
C. Seniors*	
Chapter 6: Bisexual Persons*	47
Chapter 7: Transgender Persons	49
Chapter 8: Statewide Entity Concerning GLBT Issues	53
Chapter 9: Organized Religion and Concerns of GLBT Persons	55
Chapter 10: Political Climate	57
*Additional recommendations are listed at the end of starred sections	
Appendices	61
History of the Governor's Task Forces	62
Language	64
City Visits Reports	65
Youth Resources	82
Checklist for Assessing Agency Homophobia	94
Resource lists for Chapter 5	95
Bisexual Resources	96

Introduction

Appointed 1992

The Governor's Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans (herein referred to as the Task Force) was appointed by Governor Arne Carlson in September, 1992, and completed its work in August, 1995. Its 24 members were a diverse group drawn from all parts of Minnesota. At its initial meeting, based on the findings of the first Task Force, it was determined that the mission of this Task Force should include investigation of issues concerning bisexual and transgender persons. Six special advisors were added by the Task Force for their expertise. In addition to monthly meetings, the Task Force visited 13 cities.

First Task Force

The Task Force had no staff and no budget and no member received any remuneration of any kind nor reimbursement for any expenses.

The Task Force based its work on that of its predecessor, The Governor's Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Minnesotans, which was appointed by Governor Perpich in May, 1990, and which made four recommendations (listed in the appendix, "History of the Governor's Task Forces") to the Governor in March, 1991. The passage of the Human Rights Amendment in March, 1993, implemented the first recommendation. The Task Force then focused its energies toward education and training of public sector employees regarding issues of concern for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) persons.

Second Task Force

Perhaps the most important section of this Task Force Report deals with GLBT youth. In every city visited, members heard pleas for help for GLBT young people. The report also provides information regarding the status of GLBT persons in Greater Minnesota, GLBT persons of color, seniors, and those with disabilities, as well as resource references, making it a valuable educational tool.

Recommendations

The Task Force makes six recommendations of its own, which are listed on page three of this report. The members urge the Governor and other Minnesota leaders to accept and to act on them. Such actions will result in a more human and a more humane environment for all Minnesotans.

Two notes of clarification for the reader: The term "Task Force" refers in this report to the current Governor's Task Force. Whenever a reference is made to the First Task Force, it will be so stated. A discussion of language used in the report and further information on the history and workings of the two Task Forces may be found in the appendix as well as a list of resources.

Primary Recommendations

The Governor's Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans recommends that the Governor take leadership insuring that the state of Minnesota:

1. Create a safe environment for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender young people in schools and other youth-serving organizations throughout Minnesota.
2. Change the hostile climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons in Greater Minnesota.
3. Expand diversity training for all public sector employees to specifically address discrimination and harassment of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons.
4. Encourage minority councils and other relevant entities to:
 - recognize the existence of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender people,
 - establish procedures to address the effects of multiple oppression,
 - promote education, equal treatment and delivery of services to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender people within their constituencies.
5. Establish, fund and staff a statewide "Council on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Minnesotans," to advocate at varying levels of government for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender citizens.
6. Use all means to insure support of, protection under, and education about existing public policy, including the 1993 Amendment to the Human Rights Act, and oppose attempts to restrict the rights of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender citizens.

Chapter 1

Primary Recommendations: Rationales

The Governor's Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans recommends that the Governor take leadership in insuring that the State of Minnesota:

(Fuller explanations will be found in relevant sections of this report.)

Youth

Create a safe environment for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender young people in schools and other youth-serving organizations throughout Minnesota.

The Task Force, while conducting city visits throughout Minnesota, heard one plea repeatedly, "Something must be done for our GLBT youth." Schools often are recognized as hostile environments for anyone who is "different" and these students are often harassed and subjected to verbal and physical abuse, creating a climate of fear.

There are positive programs and resources in Minnesota, evidence that the hostile environment can change when people of good will are challenged to do so.

Greater Minnesota

Change the hostile climate in Greater Minnesota for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons.

The Task Force found that in Greater Minnesota many GLBT persons live in fear and isolation. Many either are unaware of protections offered by the state, or skeptical about their effectiveness. In areas distant from large cities the problems are particularly acute for youth. Some communities lack civic leaders, educators, or clergy who are willing to publicly raise GLBT issues. State leadership can break the silence in raising these issues. While problems concerning climate remain in urban areas such as the Twin Cities, we wish to highlight how critical the problems are in Greater Minnesota.

State administration can have a significant leadership role in changing the climate for GLBT persons, especially in Greater Minnesota, by:

- A. The Governor and other state leaders speaking to relevant issues, especially when traveling around the state, providing leadership regarding problems, needs and support.
- B. State offices, which are readily visible around the state, being prepared to

offer information about existing state law and resources on GLBT issues.

- C. Requiring effective training for public sector employees throughout the state.

Diversity Training

Expand diversity training for all public sector employees to specifically address discrimination and harassment of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons.

This reemphasizes a recommendation of the First Governor's Task Force. There is a lack of awareness and understanding of how existing state law covering GLBT people is to be implemented. Even where training has been mandated (e.g., the Hate Crimes Statute specifies training for law enforcement personnel, with no deadline specified), implementation of training has been spotty. In addition to training in state agencies, all training should be disseminated to the local level.

Conforming to state law, sexual orientation must be included in anti-discrimination statements required of entities contracting with the state.

Minority Persons

Encourage minority councils and other relevant entities to:

- **recognize the existence of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons,**
- **establish procedures to address the effects of multiple oppressions,**
- **promote education, equal treatment and delivery of services to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons within their constituencies.**

Many GLBT persons face multiple discrimination, first as a member of another minority and then as a GLBT person. This discrimination is experienced not only within the majority community, but within their own minority community as well.

Persons of color often are caught in a severe identity crisis caused by compartmentalizing themselves, adopting a different persona for each activity: home, church, work, family, friends. Results of these divided lives are often depression and isolation. For many GLBT persons of color, language, immigration and citizenship are factors in their remaining closeted and invisible.

GLBT persons with disabilities are ignored or face discrimination in the majority community, first because of their disabilities, and second because of

their sexual orientation. Within the disabled community, GLBT persons are ignored because they are not heterosexual, and they are ignored within the GLBT community because they have disabilities.

GLBT seniors, are often invisible, frail and alone. However, they often are more isolated. Both seniors and persons with disabilities who must depend on others for personal care, transportation or other normal activities are vulnerable to abuse and control.

For all minority groups, information and access to resources is very limited.

Statewide Entity

Establish, fund and staff a statewide "Council on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Minnesotans", to advocate at varying levels of government for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender citizens.

Comments and testimony to the Task Force indicate that GLBT Minnesotans think that such a Council could address concerns, provide information, monitor enforcement of the Human Rights Law and provide support for local agencies. The State has councils for other minority groups.

Support for Existing Law

Use all available means to insure support of, protection under, and education about existing public policy, including the 1993 Amendment to the Human Rights Act and oppose attempts to restrict the rights of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons.

There has been a marked increase in the efforts of some organizations which have publicly targeted Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons in their crusade to make their values public policy. Their agenda includes overturning or severely eroding the 1993 amendment to the Minnesota Human Rights Act, which protects citizens from discrimination regardless of sexual orientation or identity, or perceived sexual orientation or identity. In addition, they have stated that they will work to restrict funding to school districts which address issues of sexual orientation identity. Organizations supportive of GLBT citizens are often afraid to speak out, and they limit their support, due to the attitude and tactics employed by these groups. The State of Minnesota must take a leadership role in confronting the deliberate strategy of these special interest groups which seeks to institutionalize discrimination and hatred of GLBT citizens.

Chapter 1: Primary Recommendations

Chapter 2

The Existing Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Youth in Minnesota

Primary Recommendation

Create a safe environment for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender young people in schools and other youth-serving organizations throughout Minnesota.

Concerned citizens in communities throughout the State of Minnesota indicated they see a need to make Minnesota a safer place for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) youth in all their activities.

"Something must be done for GLBT youth"

In fact, in each city the Task Force visited, when it asked, "What is the most urgent message we can bring back to the governor from your city?" - the answer heard in church basements, city halls, senior citizen high-rises, city libraries, from police chiefs, school staff, elected officials, parents and young people was, "Something must be done for our GLBT youth. They feel alone, afraid, and without support."

Hostile Environment and Self-Destructive Behavior

School-age GLBT youth frequently perceive their learning environment as hostile. The First Task Force noted that some of the most painful testimony they heard concerned school experiences.

Alone, without information

GLBT young people said they had no one to talk to and felt very alone. Failing even to find information and answers in school and/or public libraries, students reported "deadening their anxieties" by turning to self-destructive behavior.

Young women told of becoming pregnant to prove they were not lesbian. Both boys and girls used alcohol and drugs to ease their fear of "being the only one like me" and some actually turned to prostitution out of fear of being totally rejected by their peers.

Further, the First Task Force noted:

High Suicide Rate

The U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Task Force on Youth Suicide (1989) found that **gay and lesbian teenagers were almost three times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers.** The HHS Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide found that "many suicidal youth tend to be lonely, isolated and withdrawn with few social support systems.... Gay

youth face rejection and abuse from family members and other youth, and are often unwelcome in youth groups or recreational activities." The HHS Secretary's report recommended that "help for these adolescents needs to derive from all levels of a society that stigmatizes and discriminates against gays and lesbians."

GLBT Youth at Risk

Ongoing research continues to document the high risk of suicide, runaway, and other destructive behavior of GLBT youth, as well as violence they face:

Substance Abuse

In a study of gay male adolescents, 68% reported alcohol use (with 26% using alcohol once or more per week), and 44% reported drug use (with 8% considering themselves drug-dependent). Among young lesbians, 83% had used alcohol, 56% had used drugs, and 11% had used crack/cocaine in the three months preceding the study. [M. Rosario, J. Hunter, and M.J. Rotheram-Borus, Unpublished data on lesbian adolescents, HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies, New York State Psychiatric Institute, 1992.]

Homelessness

Twenty-six percent of gay youth are forced to leave home because of conflicts with their families over their sexual identities. As a consequence, up to half of the gay/bisexual males forced out of their homes engage in prostitution to support themselves, greatly increasing their risk for HIV infection. [R.C. Savin-Williams, "Theoretical Perspectives Accounting for Adolescent Homosexuality," *Journal of Adolescent Health Care*, 9(2), 95-104, March, 1988.]

HIV/AIDS

Sixty percent of young adult cases of AIDS are among men who have had sex with men. Because HIV has an average incubation period of 10.5 years before the onset of AIDS, this statistic indicates that these young people were infected as teenagers. [Center for Disease Control, 1992.]

The factors that place lesbian and gay youth at very high risk for HIV transmission include: having to exchange sex for money, unsafe sex, substance abuse, and denial of sexual identity. [HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies, New York Psychiatric Institute, 1992.]

Verbal Harassment

A 1993 survey of students at South High School in Minneapolis, revealed that three-fourths of the students had heard anti-gay or anti-lesbian remarks at school. [Peggy Lawless, "The Prevalence and Prevention of Violence at South High School," Parents United for South High (PUSH) Survey on Violence," November, 1993.]

Students say they would be very upset if they were called gay or lesbian. Being called gay would be more upsetting to boys than actual physical abuse. ["Hostile Hallways," The AAUW (American Association of University Women) Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools, 1993.]

Lack of Access to Youth Resources and Programming

The Task Force found that resources are not easily identified or found in some communities and are often fragmented. Example: Support groups may be available for college-aged GLBT youth but not for high school youth or youth not attending school.

Positive Programs and Activities across Minnesota

- School and community based support groups that are outgrowths of the statewide work of the University of Minnesota Youth and AIDS Projects.
- Across the state, GLBT youth are staffing AIDS hotlines.
- In Cloquet, GLBT youth worked with straight friends to include gay issues in their 1994 school diversity program.
- Youth have been very visible in GLBT Pride events.
- District 202 is a drop-in facility in Minneapolis, staffed by youth. It also provides a speakers' bureau.
- Runaway and off streets projects, such as The Bridge and Project Off Streets, are actively creating a safe, friendly, atmosphere for all teens, including GLBT youth.
- A rapidly expanding network of parents and other family members who have established chapters of PFLAG (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbian and Gays) in many cities across the state.
- The State Department of Education has published and released the booklet, Alone No More: Developing a School Support System for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Youth. (Though it is an excellent and much needed resource, it has come under well-organized attack by the kinds of groups referred to in recommendation 6. It is critical that this type of educational resource be expanded, not retracted.)

Change Is Possible

These positive programs demonstrate that the present climate of fear and misunderstanding that is wounding our GLBT youth can change when people of good will are challenged to do so.

This Task Force believes, given the consistent voice of concern we heard on our city visits for GLBT youth, that there is increasing agreement throughout Minnesota that it is wrong to cause young people to suffer, to have overt prejudice and violence limit their options, to force them to leave home, to make them suffer in silence, or to stop the pain by ending their own lives.

It's Time

It is time to put into action the Minnesota's Human Rights Amendment and the Anti-Hate Crime Bill for our GLBT youth and to use this legal foundation for acknowledgment and support of the GLBT youth by the adults and public youth systems across the State.

Task Force Recommendations Concerning GLBT Youth

Recommendations

1. That the Governor issue an executive order announcing a campaign to create a safe environment throughout Minnesota in our schools and youth service agencies for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender youth.
2. That such a campaign should actively involve youth and adults in a community-based dialogue and that they work with the resources of the Minnesota State Agencies and private citizens' groups to implement an effective campaign in their community.
3. That the campaign be implemented with appropriate authority, staff and funding, to create a climate of safety and respect for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender youth and their families in Minnesota.
4. That the Governor direct all State Agencies, especially the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Health to include sexual orientation in personnel training concerning anti-violence and sexual harassment policies.

See appendix pages 82-93 for additional resources

Chapter 3

Greater Minnesota: Climate and Access

Primary Recommendation

Change the hostile climate in Greater Minnesota for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons.

Some people assume that all or virtually all Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) Minnesotans live in the Metro area. This is not true. By visiting a number of cities the Task Force found that there are significant GLBT populations throughout Minnesota, though they often are not visible. **The Task Force found that in many communities in Greater Minnesota a hostile climate toward GLBT persons continues, and that in much of Greater Minnesota access to resources is poor and limited.**

Fear and Isolation

In smaller cities and rural areas, GLBT persons still live in great fear. At some of the visits around the state, it was reported that persons who wanted to attend the Task Force meetings did not for fear they might be identified in their communities. Such fear limits their productivity, and in addition, it often leads people who are victims of harassment or crimes to avoid seeking assistance.

Many live in isolation, often hiding their sexual orientation from family, co-workers, and others. Sometimes they are so afraid that they avoid contact with other GLBT persons in their region, increasing their isolation.

Thus many people live fragmented lives, open to some people, closeted to others, sometimes keeping their status as GLBT persons hidden in their home communities, and travelling to other places such as the Twin Cities to be open and express that part of their identity. Some GLBT persons live in one community, but work in another, and are open about themselves in one place, but not the other.

Continued Problems

The Task Force found that there are continuing incidents of harassment (including verbal harassment and intimidation), vandalism, bashings and discrimination in Greater Minnesota, in spite of the 1993 amendment to the Minnesota Human Rights Act which added sexual orientation to the list of protected classes.

Conditions in Greater Minnesota Communities

Access to Resources

The Task Force found that, in general, access to resources for GLBT persons in Greater Minnesota is poor and fragmented. In some communities one can easily locate resources, such as social and support and advocacy groups, in the telephone book. In other communities resources are very hard to find. **Some**

sort of centralized clearing house and coordination of efforts is needed. At the same time, there must be focus on local or regional resources and contacts, and they need to be easily identifiable and ongoing.

Around the state, sexual minority resources are often provided by volunteer organizations, including local gay and lesbian social and support groups and some chapters of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Since they are volunteer organizations, for the most part without funding, their existence and strength varies. In some areas of the state a single volunteer organization is the only resource for a large geographic area.

Communities with More Positive Climate

The Task Force found that the climate is somewhat better in larger communities and those with colleges. Larger communities typically provide more avenues for meeting GLBT persons. Where there is a college in the community, it is more likely that there will be social and support groups, as well as people who publicly support GLBT persons and speak out on issues.

Community Leadership

(a) **Positive:** In some communities there are political and religious leaders who support GLBT concerns. This support may take the form of sponsoring programs on relevant issues, writing letters to the editor or being known as a supportive clergyperson available for those who seek counseling. GLBT persons feel more comfortable in places where there are such people. At city visits where public officials participated in meetings with the Task Force, these officials were outstanding.

(b) **Negative:** In some areas of the state there are no publicly supportive people or institutions. At a number of the city visits the Task Force made there was less participation by local city, county and state officials than hoped for by the Task Force. In some communities it was clear that officials did not want to deal with these issues.

Some communities in Minnesota have a particularly harsh climate for GLBT persons. In such places there often are vocal and openly hostile community leaders (such as mayor, city council member, or member of the human rights commission), or hostile religious leaders. There are also in Minnesota some organized hate groups that have targeted GLBT persons.

Libraries

Often the first place people go to seek information on being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is their local or regional library. Library resources (both school and public) range from reasonable to poor, depending on the support of local people involved in ordering books and whether there are vocal groups fighting such acquisitions. There were suggestions that it would be valuable to have uniform guidelines and recommended lists of holdings on GLBT issues for public and school libraries.

Human Rights Commissions

Human Rights Commissions are generally seen as a resource for education and conflict resolution. The Task Force found no consistency with regard to effectiveness and commitment to GLBT issues. Some communities have no commission, or an inactive commission. In at least one city its council has declined to include sexual orientation in its Human Rights Ordinance, even though state Human Rights Law covers it. Another community reported that one member of its Human Rights Commission is openly homophobic.

Health Resources

It was reported to the Task Force that in some communities in Greater Minnesota GLBT persons have difficulty finding health resources (physical and mental) and social service organizations that are sensitive to GLBT issues. Such problems are likely to continue in the absence of mandated and required education of personnel. One community reported extreme isolation of people with HIV. Only one physician in the community admits to working with people with HIV, and few support services exist. In many smaller cities and rural areas it is difficult for GLBT persons to find supportive and understanding counselors.

Law Enforcement

In some communities the police have a good attitude toward GLBT persons and respond well in situations involving them. In others police have a negative attitude as evidenced by their insensitive responses to victims or derogatory comments made to each other, overheard on police scanners.

Sometimes law enforcement personnel are ignorant about relevant state law (the Hate Crimes Statute, the Minnesota Human Rights Act). Sometimes they are aware of the law but are unwilling to enforce it.

GLBT persons in Greater Minnesota are often hesitant to seek protection under the law. Actual or perceived negative attitudes or behavior by law enforcement personnel are impediments. So is the vulnerability that many GLBT persons feel makes them fearful of identifying discrimination or a hate crime, believing that such openness may lead to their sexual orientation being made public, making things worse for them. This is especially true in smaller cities and rural areas.

The absence of mandated and required training¹ of law enforcement personnel makes it likely that in some areas of Minnesota GLBT persons will not receive equal support of the law.

1. Minnesota 1988 Hate Crimes legislation required police departments to collect bias-motivated crime statistics. It also mandates training, but specifies no deadline. Reports indicate that many jurisdictions have not carried out such training. The 1993 sexual orientation amendment to the Minnesota Human Rights Act does not require training.

Schools and Youth

The situation with regard to schools and youth in Greater Minnesota shows need for change.

Harassment

Students who are perceived to be GLBT are frequently harassed, whether or not they are GLBT, by fellow students and staff in schools. Often nothing is done, and sometimes the victims are blamed for the harassment.

Teachers who are perceived to be GLBT are also harassed by administrators, fellow teachers, and students.

Resource Issues

In Greater Minnesota there are few supportive resources for young people. Some areas reported having no support staff in the schools who are sympathetic and/or educated on GLBT issues. School counselors are sometimes openly homophobic and often not prepared to help GLBT youth in their schools. Given the well-documented high rates of depression and attempted suicide among GLBT youth, the needs here are critical.

Lack of transportation often makes it hard for young people to visit supportive groups and institutions in the region or in the Metro area.

Need for Training

Mandated, adequate, required training for administrators and teachers is necessary. Administrators are often timid in dealing with GLBT issues, fearing negative reactions from in the community. Teachers are often reluctant to deal with such issues, fearing negative reactions from administrators.

Minority GLBT Persons

GLBT persons who are members of other minority groups face special difficulties. Lesbians and bisexual or transgender women are members of at least two minority groups. GLBT persons who have disabilities, or who are African American, American Indian, Asian, or Latino/Latina face even greater isolation and difficulties when they live in smaller cities and rural areas. The Task Force found that it was difficult to get information about multiple-minority people, perhaps because they have even greater fears. Future efforts must be made to identify special problems and needs in this area. Throughout the state it is important to seek information about the problems and needs of GLBT persons in migrant and formerly migrant populations.

Coerced Relocation

GLBT persons who might prefer to remain in their home communities frequently move to the Twin Cities or other urban areas because of concerns about harassment or violence, or because of isolation. This represents a loss

of population to some smaller cities and rural areas of the state, as well as a loss of the talents, economic benefits, the tax base such individuals might have brought to those communities.

Task Force Recommendations Concerning Greater Minnesota

Recommendations

1. The Governor and other state leaders should speak to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender issues, especially when travelling around the state, breaking the silence and providing leadership regarding problems, needs and support.
2. Mandate training directed at homophobia issues for people involved in law enforcement, education and human services. In addition to requiring such training, there must be oversight to make sure it is adequately done.
3. Support and encourage the development of local and regional organizations which will address GLBT issues.
4. Establish regional and local resources for GLBT information and referral.
5. Require schools to provide training on GLBT issues to all staff, including support staff.
6. Collect information about GLBT persons (a) in Greater Minnesota and especially (b) those who are members of racial minority groups and persons with disabilities. The information collected should include hate crime statistics.
7. Educate persons in Greater Minnesota about coverage provided GLBT persons by the Human Rights Act through such means as public forums presented by the State Department of Human Rights.
8. Encourage public libraries to have GLBT resources in their collections.

Chapter 4

Training for Public Sector Employees

Primary Recommendation Expand diversity training for all public sector employees to specifically address issues of concern to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons.

Relevant Agencies The Task Force identified those state agencies which deal most directly with the issue of discrimination toward Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender persons by nature of their work. These are the Departments of: **Education, Employee Relations, Human Rights, Human Services, Public Health and Public Safety.** Task Force members met with officials from each of these agencies and found that all acknowledged the need for addressing the issue of sexual orientation diversity and were supportive of doing so.

Diversity Councils Some of the agencies have diversity councils whose goals are to insure that employees who serve a wide clientele understand that everyone has value and deserves respect. Diversity considerations include training, recruitment, mentorship and internship of employees. Other departments are receptive to training efforts around this issue, but have no plan or activity in place.

Human Services The most comprehensive diversity training program is in the Department of Human Services. The basis for their curriculum is an employee survey, which will be repeated. They also utilize a video series which has been well received.

Education The Department of Education, using HIV prevention funding (Fall, 1994), provided one time start-up costs for a fulltime program specialist to organize and implement staff training on GLBT issues, and to increase or initiate support for GLBT students and families in a metro school system. It also initiated programs to develop better attitudes within the department toward GLBT persons and will include anti-homophobia training in their anti-violence training.

The Department of Education has also published and has distributed upon request the booklet, Alone No More: Developing a School Support System for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth. This publication has been attacked by individuals and by organizations who are pressuring the governor to forbid its distribution by the Department of Education and to order it removed from schools. The Task Force recommends wide distribution and use of the publication as a resource for school staff.

Employee Relations

The Department of Employee Relations (DOER) has jurisdiction over employees in the State University, Community College and Technical College Systems, among others. Task Force members encouraged DOER staff to include GLBT issues in diversity training in those institutions. (DOER does not have jurisdiction over the University of Minnesota which is separate from the State University System.)

An interagency diversity action council whose members are state employees and includes GLBT representation advises the DOER diversity director. At the time of the meeting with Task Force members the council was working on a strategy and curriculum for delivering its recommendations. It was also compiling a directory of public and private resources in the state. Subsequent to the meeting DOER did publish a diversity pamphlet. However, it included no reference to sexual orientation issues.

Overall the attitude within state agencies toward training is positive. The efforts within agencies are neither uniform nor coordinated. Some agencies include education about GLBT issues in their training, some are taking steps to do so, and some appear willing but have not. While lack of funding is a serious consideration for agencies as they add GLBT training to their agendas, it is critical that these departments move beyond supportive words, and that their cultures reflect such training.

The Task Force urges the departments listed to provide education and training for their employees and for the constituent groups which they serve. Since these agencies have direct contact with and impact on GLBT communities, it is particularly important that they understand the issues. These agencies need to be especially conscious of the need for education and training in Greater Minnesota, where there appears to be less understanding and more overt discrimination according to repeated comments provided to the Task Force.

Departments or employers wishing to assess the climate within their own work environments may refer to the Assessment Checklist which can be found in the appendix, page 94.

Chapter 5

Minority Groups

***Primary
Recommendation***

Encourage minority councils and other relevant entities to

- **recognize the existence of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender people**
- **establish procedures to address the effects of multiple oppression**
- **promote education, equal treatment and deliver services to GLBT people within their constituencies.**

Groups

- A. Persons of Color
 - 1. African Americans
 - 2. American Indians
 - 3. Asians
 - 4. Latinos/Latinas
- B. Persons with Disabilities
- C. Seniors

A. Persons of Color in the GLBT Community

Process of Collecting Information

Members of the Task Force solicited information on dilemmas faced by racial and ethnic minorities in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) communities. The findings were then circulated to various racial and ethnic minority groups for further commentary. This section of the report presents a compilation of some broad general findings and should not be construed as being representative of all racial minorities in the GLBT communities.

General Findings

Concerns

Large numbers of GLBT people of color suffer from poverty, physical and mental health concerns, crime and discrimination. Each of the groups of GLBT people of color noted difficulties in identifying themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in their respective racial or ethnic communities. Overall views ranged from claiming GLBT discrimination must take a "back seat" until the larger specter of racism is vanquished to seeing GLBT issues as a phenomenon of Eurocentric culture and not truly a part of racial or ethnic minority groups' concerns.

GLBT people of color also noted discrimination from the larger, white GLBT community. This racism may take many forms from blatant racial stereotyping and negative slurs to more passive forms such as failing to solicit input from people of color on major issues affecting the GLBT community.

Pressures for Acceptance

Many persons in the GLBT communities of color noted a phenomenon of doing things to make oneself more attractive to white GLBT people. For instance, some Asians may be more attractive to white GLBT people if they are passive in their behavior. African-Americans may be more attractive if they disassociate themselves from other African-Americans or speak less "street language." Latinos may be more attractive if they look "ethnic," yet speak with unaccented English. In a society where benefits are conferred based on one's whiteness, many oppressed people may attempt to make themselves more like the dominant group as a survival tactic. This happens in society at large and in the GLBT community.

Positive Developments

Social and political groups have been developed to address the specific economic, health, gender and racial discrimination concerns of GLBT racial minorities. They provide a comfortable sanctuary from discrimination, and foster respect and empowerment in the larger racial and ethnic communities, as well as in the GLBT community. GLBT people of color want such groups to thrive to help lead GLBT minority communities. In

addition, it is important that both the wider GLBT community and the wider racial and ethnic communities acknowledge and support these groups.

Resources

The appendix contains basic lists of resources, contacts of regional groups of GLBT people of color, and books and videos which address some of the issues that may serve as a starting point in promoting greater understanding and more dialogue.

Task Force Recommendations Concerning Persons of Color

Recommendations

1. Coordinate more fully the efforts of the larger communities to combat HIV/AIDS infection, poverty, isolation and physical abuse into language culturally palatable to the various GLBT racial minorities.
2. Mandate sensitivity and diversity training for social service workers, medical and mental health providers, peace officers and human rights officers on important issues facing GLBT racial minorities.
3. Disseminate multi-lingual educational materials on services available to GLBT people, particularly to the Latino/Latina community in Greater Minnesota and to the Asian-American community in the metro area.
4. Promote further research into specific dilemmas faced by GLBT racial minorities in Minnesota.

1. African-American Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Persons

African-American Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) people face difficulties due to their status as minorities in a minority community. They must confront racism in the GLBT community, homophobia in the black community, and both in the society at large.

Who are African-American GLBT Minnesotans?

Demographics

It is difficult to assess the exact number of GLBT black Minnesotans. However, some demographic generalizations can reasonably be put forward. African-American GLBT persons constitute between 9,450 to 15,750 Minnesotans.¹ They suffer statistically higher rates of HIV infection² and other medical concerns, poverty, and isolation.

While they tend to be concentrated in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, there are some GLBT African-Americans throughout Greater Minnesota. People in smaller cities and rural areas face particularly acute dilemmas. They may either feel a need to closely align themselves with other black people and hide their sexual identity, or more closely envelope themselves in the GLBT community, downplaying their racial identity.

Pressures and Problems

The multiple pressures of race, affectional orientation, and gender have forced many African-American GLBT people to compartmentalize their identity. One face may be used for the workplace, another for the family, a third for the church and yet others for various social situations. Some invoke such elaborate strategies to keep the aspects of their identity separated that they do not develop a complete sense of self in any aspect of their lives, resulting in depression and isolation.

A Positive Development

Many African-American GLBT people are successful in balancing the various aspects of their identity, and have begun to develop a strong community of African-American GLBT persons. Such groups as IRUWA, Women of Color, Circle of Love and Taranga are examples of this success.

1. 4.5 million Minnesotans x 3.5% of Minnesotans are African-American x 4% to 10% Minnesotans are GLBT.

2. Jerome W. Wright discusses this in "African-American Male Sexual Behavior and the Risk for HIV Infection," *Human Organization*. Vol. 52, No. 4, 1993, p.421. He notes: "In May, 1993, the Aids Hotline reports that 73,686 of the 249,199 males who have been identified as having AIDS are African-Americans."

Homophobia in the African-American Community

Awareness of the ongoing struggle for civil rights is strong in the African-American community. However, the fight against racial oppression has come at a cost for African-Americans facing other forms of discrimination. In particular, there has

been a lack of attention in the black community toward sexual orientation discrimination directed against African-American GLBT people. Cultural anxiety around the topic of sexual or affectional orientation in the black community has restricted GLBT people's expression of their identities.

Some social institutions in the black community have been reluctant to address the issues of African-American GLBT people, claiming that limited resources must be devoted to combatting racism. This misses the point that many forms of oppression come from the same wellspring. The same intolerant person who hates a black man because of his skin color is often just as likely to despise someone because of her sexual orientation. Limited resources are more effectively used in fighting various forms of oppression together.

Religious Institutions in the African-American Community

Churches

The place of religious institutions remains strong in the black community. While some black churches are supportive, in others traditional religious dogma often is used to oppress African-American GLBT people who express their identity. Many African-American GLBT persons are ostracized for "coming out". Often they are forced to hide or "closet" their affectional orientation in order to remain a member of their church, temple or mosque, or to be a leader. One black gay man described the extreme difficulty he faced in choosing to leave the seminary and his religious community because it could not accept his sexual orientation.

Anti-Gay Alliances

Another threat is a rise in the efforts of anti-gay religious groups to court favor in black religious institutions. Religious fundamentalists who may have been hard pressed a generation ago to acknowledge basic civil rights based on race are now pressing hard to align themselves with African-American religious institutions in an effort to combat "gay rights" groups. The result may be greater oppression against black GLBT people.

(See also Chapter 9: Organized Religion and the Concerns of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Persons.)

Racism in the GLBT Community

Unequal treatment

Racial prejudice is pervasive within the GLBT community, even though

many white GLBT people are intimately familiar with the pain and stigma of bigotry. African-American GLBT people complain that it is difficult to secure or maintain positions of authority in the GLBT community because of racial inequalities. They suffer from tokenism when allowed into GLBT institutions. Many African-American GLBT persons speak of different treatment than their white counterparts at social service agencies, housing and accommodations, restaurants and bars. For instance, African-American GLBT people claim that they are more often asked to show identification when entering entertainment facilities and they often feel unwelcome and treated rudely at GLBT social service agencies.

Compartmentalizing Identity

As a result of these pressures, GLBT African-Americans are less likely to take advantage of social services in the GLBT community. In addition, they are forced to compartmentalize their identity and show different faces depending on the social or professional situation. For instance, when in a group of white GLBT people, African-American GLBT people may not speak or associate with other African-Americans for fear of appearing "too black". At the other extreme, one may be just as likely to forego a social situation with any white GLBT people for fear of the label of "selling out". It is extremely difficult for African-American GLBT persons to achieve the "happy medium" between the various aspects of their identity when constantly bombarded by racial inequalities from the white GLBT community.

Development of a Black GLBT Community

Black GLBT Organizations

A positive development has been the growth of black GLBT organizations. Several social, economic, political and health groups exist by and for African-American GLBT people. For instance, Taranga is a place where black gay men discuss external and internal forms of racial and gay oppression. Similarly, Women of Color is a social and political outlet for many lesbians to share and draw from the richness of their community. The Circle of Love is a welcoming group of African-Americans which addresses the issues of HIV/AIDS in the Black community. These groups and others are encouraging signs of empowerment and should be supported and promoted by the larger African-American, GLBT and straight communities.

2. American Indian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Minnesotans

A Time of Crisis

American Indian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) people are in a time of crisis. Confronting racism, homophobia, and discrimination, they face severe barriers to resolving these issues, especially at a time when HIV has had a disproportionate effect on their community. They have had to turn to each other and sometimes to the broader community for the support they need to survive. Like other racial and ethnic minority groups in Minnesota, American Indian GLBT people are minorities in a minority community. While this experience is similar to that of other minority communities, it would be inaccurate to say that the specific problems encountered are the same, or sometimes even similar. It can be said, however, that American Indian GLBT people encounter racism in the GLBT community, homophobia in the Indian community, and a range of discrimination problems in the society at large, including racism, classism, and homophobia.

Demographics

In Minnesota, people who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native/Aleut number 49,909, as of the 1990 census, and comprise 1.1% of the total population. This means that the American Indian community is the smallest of the four racial groups identified in this report. While it is impossible to accurately estimate the number of American Indian GLBT Minnesotans, a rough estimate would be between 1,750 and 5,000 people.¹ Like other minority communities, American Indians in Minnesota face higher rates of poverty, unemployment, alcoholism and chemical dependency, disease, HIV infection, and suicide. The impact of these problems is compounded severely for GLBT people. As one person noted, "Marginalization and poverty has an even greater effect on Indian gays and lesbians...the impact is even greater."

Reservations Urban Concentrations

Merely noting numbers does not provide a clear picture of the Indian community, however. There are eleven reservations in Minnesota, and three significant urban concentrations of Indian population: Duluth, Bemidji, and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The Ojibwe reservations are: Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake, White Earth. The Lakota/Dakota reservations are: Prairie Island, Lower Sioux, Upper Sioux, Shakopee Mdewakanton.

¹ $49,000 \times (3.5\% - 10\%) = 1,747$ to 4,991 Minnesotans. Thanks to the Urban Coalition for research assistance.

Survival in a "White Man's World"

There are a number of tribal affiliations represented within the Indian population of Minnesota, above and beyond the Ojibwe and Lakota. In fact, to lump all Indians under a single label or rubric is to obscure the differences that do exist between tribes. And while there are tribal differences, these seem to be less notable than the differences between reservations and other centers of Indian population concentration. This is in part due to a legacy of imposed isolation and, beginning in the 1950's, forced urbanization. Combined with child adoption outside of the Indian community and other governmental policies, there is a very real ambivalence within the Indian community about how to interact with the "white man's world."

Lack of Indian GLBT Organizations

The urban areas provide some level of contact with a broader GLBT community, which is almost completely inaccessible on reservations. However, interaction with the majority culture also exposes Indian GLBT people not only to racism, but also homophobia and other forms of discrimination. The lack of organizations of almost any variety for Indian GLBT people is a significant problem for the community, overall. This is heightened by the range of problems that are considered to be high priorities for broader Indian community-based organizations and agencies.

The Urban/Rural Split

GLBT Indians often move to urban centers, particularly the Twin Cities, in order to find other GLBT people, even though this means separation from their community of origin. If they do live in an urban center, they often face significant pressure to assimilate into the predominantly white GLBT community. If their ethnicity is recognized, it is often also sexualized and creates a stereotype of Indian GLBT identity.

Culture of Silence

Those GLBT Indians who live on reservations face a "culture of silence" where there is tacit recognition of the theoretical existence of GLBT people, but little acceptance of the reality of actual GLBT persons in the community. This sometimes results in Indian GLBT people leading closeted lives, sometimes victimized by other Indians, and often marginalized by the Indian community. As one interviewee noted, it is difficult for Indian GLBT people to be "out/out" -- out as a GLBT person, and also claiming identity as an Indian. As this person noted, "More than one person has told me, 'Up here on the reservation, we don't have any gays'-- but scratch a little deeper...."

Intolerance as a Legacy of Colonialization

Pre-Colonial Acceptance

It is important to remember that the Indian community is not a monolithic bloc. Distinct tribal differences may be as significant, or more significant, than those between different European ethnic groups. Common to most

tribes, however, is a recognition and acceptance of those people now thought of as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. Lakota and Ojibwe, for example, both have words for people who engage in homosexual and/or transgender roles and behavior. In almost all cases, traditional roles for GLBT people involved clearly defined roles in tribal society, and sometimes a recognition of their difference as a special gift or attribute. This should be noted in contrast to the historical legacy of homosexuals in Western culture, a legacy of marginalization, shame, and discrimination.

Forced Assimilation

Unfortunately, 500 years of forced cultural and religious assimilation have resulted in widespread rejection of traditional Indian understandings of GLBT people, and specifically of Indian concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity. The result is the rejection of GLBT people, Indian and otherwise. European models of these original roles and behaviors have even further muddied the waters. For example, the use of the term "berdache" to describe a whole range of homosexual and/or transgender roles is borrowed from Persian through French, and has no root in any Indian language; furthermore, definitions of the word are often inaccurate and discriminatory.

Varying Conceptions of Identity

A more subtle conceptual problem lies in the very words, "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual" and "transgender." In the Indian community recently, there has been the use of the term "two-spirited" to recognize this cultural identity for GLBT people, but this term has not won universal acceptance. But the difficulty lies in the reality that the definition of GLBT identity originates in the dominant white culture, not in Indian cultures. While progress is being made to build awareness of original traditions and understandings, it is not consistent or truly widespread.

Lack of Resources

Generally speaking, there is a lack of discussion and education about sexuality in general and, much less specifically, about homosexuality, among Indians. This lack of discussion makes it difficult to build awareness of the needs of GLBT Indians around a variety of issues. The spread and onslaught of HIV and AIDS within the Indian community has provided an opportunity to begin that education and discussion, sometimes resulting in a quick response to deal with and accept the reality of GLBT Indians. This is perhaps due to the awareness on the part of Indians of the need to maintain community cohesion and to support one another in the face of ongoing adversity.

But the lack of awareness of GLBT Indians and their issues remains a difficult problem. There is:

- No institutional base of resources within the Indian community for

GLBT issues. This is due partly to slowness in accepting GLBT Indians who are open, and partly to a simple lack of available resources.

- Little awareness of problems such as HIV, drug abuse, family violence, and other issues in a GLBT context. While there are some organizations in the Indian community for these issues, they are not specifically for GLBT people.
- A host of other issues with significant impact on the Indian community that have been accorded higher priority on the agendas of Indian social service organizations. Entirely understandable, this highlights the context of continuous crisis in which the Indian community has found itself.

In addition, the lack of Indian GLBT organizations must be noted. Previous groups, such as America Indian Gays and Lesbians, have folded, leaving the Minnesota American Indian AIDS Task Force perhaps the only organization that is based in the Indian community which serves the needs of GLBT Indians.

Needs

The needs of the GLBT Indian people and their families include:

Indian Models

- More support for discussions of sexuality and sex education at all levels in the Indian community, and particularly within an Indian context. Attempts to use models taken from Western culture and mainstream society are much more likely to fail, in comparison with models developed within the Indian community.

Organization

- Creation of and support of organizations and groups that are specifically for Indian GLBT people and their various needs. This would include social, political, religious and other needs.

Dialogue

- Indians and other communities of color to begin and sustain a dialogue about multiple oppressions and the effects of racism and homophobia, particularly at the institutional level.

HIV/AIDS

- Health concerns of Indians about HIV and AIDS to be addressed, particularly on reservations. The efforts of the Ogitchidag Players of the MAIATF (a youth theater troupe) are a good example of how to begin education about HIV prevention within the Indian community.

Inclusive Solutions

- People to address the range of crisis-producing issues in an inclusive context that recognizes the inter-relationship between problems such as homophobia, alcoholism, depression, etc. And along with that, there

homophobia, alcoholism, depression, etc. And along with that, there needs to be an on-going effort to hold agencies and organizations responsible for the consequences of their actions on Indian people and the Indian community.

3. Asian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Persons in Minnesota

A Diverse Community

The Asian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) community in Minnesota is comprised of people from many different Asian ethnic backgrounds. It is not a large community, but nevertheless is becoming one of the most visible groups of GLBT people of color. In the past three years, Asian GLBT persons have made enormous strides in gaining recognition from both the dominant gay and straight communities. They have formed support groups and mounted political demonstrations. They have marched in the Twin Cities Gay Pride parade and organized events to bring communities together.

Yet, despite the increasing visibility and strength of the Asian GLBT community, its members must continue to battle racism and homophobia, to bridge cultural gaps and to further develop Asian awareness of important GLBT issues. In the process of building alliances, Asian GLBT persons are vigilant to assert their individual Asian identities to dispel notions of a monolithic Asian community.

Demographics of the Asian GLBT Community

General

Only a small number of Asian GLBT persons are active and "out" in the Minnesota GLBT community. The majority of GLBT Asians are "closeted" because of fears of losing their jobs or being ostracized by family and friends. The ethnic and cultural backgrounds of Minnesota Asian GLBT persons include Vietnamese, Hmong, Laotian, Malaysian, Thai, Singaporean, Filipino, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Samoan and Burmese people. Some GLBT Asians are multi-racial and/or multi-ethnic. The community further recognizes differences in generational and immigration status. Asian GLBT persons come from all walks of life and are employed in many different fields at various income levels. Those who receive low incomes may live with their families or other groups to maximize resources. Few are homeless.

Twin Cities

Most GLBT Asians live in the Twin cities, where GLBT culture thrives. Those Asian GLBT persons who are politically and socially "out" and active in the Minnesota GLBT community tend to be students and/or artists. Asian lesbians and female bisexuals tend to be more politically visible than their male counterparts. The newly acquired self-awareness of the Asian GLBT community has facilitated the formation of culturally-specific support groups, such as Sankalpam (South Asian Network of Khush), Asian Pride, and APLB (Asian-Pacific Lesbians and Bisexual Women).

Besides providing social forums, these groups are also the focal points of Asian political activism which has, in the last three years, developed in sophistication and scope.

Greater Minnesota

GLBT Asians in Greater Minnesota suffer from the isolation of small city, small town or rural demographics. They generally live in more pervasive anonymity than their Twin Cities counterparts, but also rely more on their families and the local Asian communities for support. In more populous towns where there are GLBT support groups, many Asians avoid them. First, they are mostly white and don't necessarily address issues that pertain to Asian GLBT persons. Second, Asian GLBT persons in small towns do not necessarily have a concept of GLBT identity such that they see the need for support in this aspect of their lives. Thus, GLBT Asians may find each other only by happenstance. Those who seek a more active social life will travel to the Twin Cities, or cities in Wisconsin or Canada. However, these occasional trips hardly compensate for the loneliness and isolation. For some, family ties bind them to the small towns. Others speak of leaving for places with greater diversity.

Issues of Concern to Asian GLBT Minnesotans

Although the Asian GLBT community is not monolithic and, consequently, issues affecting one segment of the community may not be significant to another, there are concerns common to all or most. They include racism on the part of the white GLBT community, internalized racism, Asian prejudice against other people of color, sexist and classist attitudes within the Asian GLBT community, homophobia within the straight Asian communities, social isolation from other GLBT Asians, immigration issues, and language barriers.

White GLBT Racism

White GLBT persons often stereotypically view Asians as exotic or submissive. When white partners have such expectations, these attitudes have a detrimental impact on the self-esteem of Asians who may play out these roles in hopes of making the relationship succeed. Some white GLBT persons will not date Asians because the stereotypes limit white appreciation of Asian identity. Many Asian GLBT persons, particularly males, tend to prefer dating whites over other Asians because of the paucity of other Asians and because of internalized racism (a result of exposure to media concepts of white beauty and success). White racism and Asian internalized racism reinforce each other and constrain the range of relationships.

Community Interaction--Sexism and Classism

Relations between those GLBT persons who are Asian, and those from other communities of color are cordial and cooperative. However, some GLBT Asians harbor prejudicial beliefs about other people of color. Sexism and classism have had greater impact on the Asian GLBT

community than on other communities of color. Many Asian GLBT males come from cultures where women are viewed as subservient and inferior to men. These attitudes remain to some extent in the Asian GLBT community and have divided it along gender lines. Relations between Asian GLBT men and women are also cordial and cooperative, but the women tend to regard the men with some distrust and resentment. The Asian GLBT community is also divided along class lines. There have sometimes been conflicts between Asian GLBT persons of different generations, between Asians who speak English well and those who do not, and between those who are wealthy and those who are not.

Cultural Isolation

Despite the visibility of the Asian GLBT community, many GLBT Asians (especially those in Greater Minnesota) still have not been able to find relief from social isolation. Some Asian GLBT persons are not aware of the existence of Asian support groups. Others do not like the political tone of some of the Asian groups or do not feel that the existing groups meet their needs. Further, homophobia within the Asian community has made it difficult for GLBT Asians to acknowledge their identity. Many Asian cultures place great emphasis on duty to family and regard homosexuality as an embarrassment and an artifact of western culture. Thus, the coming out process for Asian GLBT persons is hampered by both guilt and isolation.

Issues Affecting Immigrants

GLBT Asians in Minnesota who are immigrants or foreigners on visas face additional issues. The language barrier prevents some Asians from finding housing easily, obtaining jobs, or participating in the political process. Basic social services, such as AIDS prevention programs, do not address the special needs of Asians. There are few brochures available in Asian languages and little in the way of AIDS outreach to Asians. Although recently the United States Government made persecution on the basis of sexual orientation a ground for receiving political asylum, many Asians who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents continue to avoid expression of their GLBT identity for fear of deportation.

4. Latino/Latina Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Persons in Minnesota

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Latino/Latina community is rich and complex, and faces difficult dilemmas stemming from institutionalized forms of oppression and discrimination, economic hardship, and struggles to integrate cultural, familial, racial and religious identities with their identities as GLBT persons.

The Latino/Latina GLBT Communities

Multiple Communities It is important to note that there is not a single Latino/Latina community, but rather there are multiple communities. "Latino" is a term used in the United States to describe persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Central and South American descent. Each country has its own customs, values and forms of language. Thus there are great cultural differences among members of the Latino/Latina community.

Racial Diversity There is also wide racial diversity within the Latino/Latina community with individuals possessing black, white, mulatto, and American Indian features. Finally, there are significant differences between those who live in urban or rural areas, and between those who are migrant and those who permanently reside in Minnesota.

Because the GLBT Latino/Latina community is so very diverse, it is difficult to summarize the characteristics of the group and the challenges they face. The following is a discussion of some of the struggles that most members of the GLBT Latino/Latina community share.

Racism and Homophobia

Effects Discrimination in employment and housing, harassment and violence, fear and hatred are realities faced by GLBT persons on a daily basis. In addition, GLBT Latinos/Latinas have to live with and confront both racism within the greater GLBT community and the intense homophobia within the greater Latino/Latina community.

As a result, Latino gay, bisexual and transgender men are twice a minority, and Latina lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, who must also deal with a culture that is sexist, are thrice a minority. The difficulties within the processes of coming out, developing a healthy sense of identity, and living as GLBT persons are compounded by the context of a heterosexist and sexist Latino/Latina culture immersed in a racist society.

Institutions within the Latino/Latina Community

There are three primary institutions within the Latino/Latina community that increase the complexities and struggles of coming out and living as a GLBT person: language, the Church and the family.

Language

Spanish is the first or only language for some Minnesota Latinos/Latinas. While this in and of itself is not a problem, difficulties do arise for GLBT Latinos/Latinas who are not fluent in English. They may have trouble becoming a part of and being included in the activities of the larger GLBT community. They may be unable to find employment and/or housing, may not receive adequate health or mental health care or other services. If an interpreter is employed, problems may arise if that person does not accurately interpret because of his or her own homophobia or heterosexist attitudes. Resources such as bilingual health professionals and other service providers, and even English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are scarce or unavailable in many Minnesota communities.

Religion

The Church is one of the primary institutions within Latino/Latina communities serving as a guide to moral behavior and the development of values. The majority of Latinos/Latinas have been raised in the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches that homosexual behavior is a sin. As a result there is a stigma against GLBT people who are seen as turning away from God. There is little outreach to GLBT members of the church. There is active discouragement of GLBT identity and behavior. Therefore, most GLBT persons receive little or no support from their churches.

Family

In Latino/Latina culture the concept of self-identity is often different than in other cultures. Rather than being understood as independent, autonomous and isolated, in Latino/Latina culture the self is interrelated with the institution of family. The immediate and extended families are of primary importance to the individual. The individual's sense of self extends beyond oneself to include the immediate and extended family, thus creating a collective sense of self. As a result, the family, not the individual, is perceived as the basic unit in the culture, and relationships within the family are central to identity and therefore, of great importance.

Family as Safety Net

In addition to this difference in understanding of self, there are practical reasons why family is so important. Many Latinos/Latinas are in lower socioeconomic strata in the United States. Living as an extended family they can pool resources, thus improving their standard of living significantly. Particularly with migrant and formerly migrant people in rural areas, families need each other for economic, and often, physical survival.

Barriers to Coming Out

The stigma against GLBT persons combined with the importance of family and community within the culture, make it extremely difficult to risk coming

out to one's family. It is not unusual for Latino/Latina families and communities to shun or banish their GLBT relatives, nor is it uncommon for GLBT Latinos/Latinas to protect their families from the shame of having a GLBT relative.

Given that losing family and community is losing part of oneself, many GLBT Latinos/Latinas do not risk telling family, friends, or anyone in the community about their sexual orientation, making the struggle to integrate cultural and familial identities with their identities as GLBT persons very difficult.

Economics

Poverty

One of the fastest growing ethnic minority groups in Minnesota, Latinos/Latinas are often in lower socioeconomic levels. This is a particular problem for GLBT Latinos/Latinas who may be banished from the family and into economic disaster. In cases of migrant or formerly migrant families where poverty is already extremely high, being banished could mean starvation or literally working to death to support oneself.

Health Care Access Problems

Access to health care is limited due to lack of health insurance. Many are unwilling to use health care systems because of mistrust which stems from previous mistreatment (e.g., involuntary sterilization of Latina women). This is especially problematic given the disproportionately high percentage of HIV+ and AIDS cases in both the straight and GLBT Latino populations. Lack of treatment and lack of education have been disastrous for the community.

Mental health services also underserve GLBT Latinos/Latinas as there are few resources and few professionals to work effectively with them. Language barriers, lack of understanding of the unique dilemmas faced by GLBT Latinos/Latinas, and at times, an aversion to working with them altogether, prevent GLBT Latinos/Latinas from receiving adequate health care services.

B. Gay Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Persons with Disabilities

Quadruple Discrimination

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) persons with disabilities face what could be called quadruple discrimination. They experience double societal discrimination because of their disabilities and because of their sexual orientation. They also experience disability discrimination from non-disabled GLBT persons as well as bias against their sexual orientation by non-GLBT persons with disabilities.

Issues of Concern

Accessibility and Vulnerability

Many non-disabled people are oblivious to concerns of persons with disabilities. They know little about the problems experienced by persons who must fight to retain their independence when they require personal care assistance for routine daily living. They know little about the difficulty of getting services, about accessibility, or about vulnerability. For GLBT persons with disabilities these concerns are even more serious because they are present not only in society as a whole, but also in the GLBT community.

Most GLBT persons with disabilities live in the metropolitan area, both because there is access to employment, housing, and public transportation, and because most GLBT activities occur in the Twin Cities. While the First Task Force held public hearings in both Minneapolis and St. Paul and some GLBT persons with disabilities were able to attend, the Second Task Force held all its city visits outside the metro area. Since few GLBT persons with disabilities live in Greater Minnesota, and since some meeting spaces were inaccessible, the Task Force did not hear their concerns.

Accessibility within the GLBT Community

Inaccessibility and GLBT Events

GLBT persons with disabilities often find events inaccessible or difficult to access. First, one must know that an event will occur. If publicity is by poster, bulletin board or print media only, then persons who are blind or have learning disabilities may not even know of it. Next, one must find out if it is accessible. Often GLBT groups have extremely limited budgets and rent cheap but inaccessible "alternative" space. In theaters, for instance, there may be only one or two wheelchair spaces which do not permit a partner or friends to sit with the person using the wheelchair. One very popular GLBT restaurant is totally inaccessible so that people must get out of their chairs and crawl up or down the steps to get in or out of this facility.

Lack of Technical Assistance

Even if accessibility is not a problem, other factors may prevent participation. For instance, Braille or taped programs are rarely provided, and events with qualified sign language interpreters are limited. Assistive listening devices and descriptive listening services are available at only the most progressive theaters.

GLBT persons with disabilities are reluctant to complain because they know the events operate with limited funds, because they know the event coordinators, or they fear that such confrontation will further alienate them from the GLBT community.

Transportation

Any person with a disability who relies on public transportation feels vulnerable going home after evening events. This is more the case for a GLBT person for whom revealing the location to a driver also identifies one as a GLBT person which poses the threat of harassment from the paratransit or cab driver. If GLBT events are held where public transportation or paratransit is unavailable, it would eliminate access for many GLBT persons with disabilities.

Acceptance within the GLBT Community

Stigmatization

The difficulties that non-disabled people have in interacting with persons with disabilities are also present in the GLBT community. At an event a well-intentioned person may help a person with a disability find a chair, get something to eat or drink for the person and then abandon him or her. It should be assumed that persons with disabilities have the same interests, needs, dreams and desires as persons without disabilities, and interactions should occur based on this assumption. In reality, persons without disabilities often view persons with disabilities as unattractive, asexual, or sexually unattractive and simply ignore them.

Invisible Disabilities

GLBT persons with invisible disabilities such as mental illness, seizure disorders, learning disabilities, or behavioral disorders are often afraid to reveal them. They try to "pass" always fearing that their disability will give them away. They find it uncomfortable in the GLBT community, fearing rejection should they be "found out".

HIV and AIDS

GLBT persons who are HIV positive or who have AIDS are newly facing disabling conditions. They are often acutely aware that the GLBT community now views them differently, as disabled persons, while often they are not yet ready to consider themselves as having disabilities.

Progress

GLBT Pride: A Model of Accessibility

An example of a completely accessible event is the annual GLBT Pride Parade and events held in Loring Park in Minneapolis. A separate committee works only on accessibility issues for Pride events and persons with disabilities feel uniquely welcomed in the GLBT community. There are accessible bathrooms, sign language interpreters, Braille and taped programs, menus and announcements, and accommodations for those who want to march in the parade or just observe it.

Issues of Education and Care

Many persons with disabilities have spent long periods of time in hospitals or other institutions, and/or have been educated in special schools. These young people often have had no sex education or counseling by educators, social workers or other service providers, often with the blessing of their parents who mistakenly believe that lack of access to such information will protect their children from sexual feelings, sexual relationships, and even sexual violence.

Coming Out Issues

Persons with disabilities who are in the process of "coming out" are often advised by therapists not to attach another label to themselves so as to be less divergent from societal norms. Persons with disabilities who wonder if they are transgender have almost no access to information and little or no access to funds for treatment or surgery.

Control

Persons who are forced to live in nursing homes face other issues. Nursing home staff, doctors, parents or guardians control whom they see or talk to, where they go, what they do, what they read. This can mean almost insurmountable oppression for GLBT persons with disabilities in nursing home settings.

Data about GLBT Persons with Disabilities

There is some difficulty collecting information about persons with disabilities because there are so many different disabilities, and two persons with the same disability may have very different conditions and concerns. Surveys regarding concerns of persons with disabilities usually do not include GLBT-related questions. Surveys on GLBT issues generally lack questions to determine concerns of GLBT persons with disabilities.

The Northstar Survey, attached as an appendix to the First Task Force Report, identified 1% of its respondents as persons with disabilities, but contained no questions that would elicit concerns specific to them. The Second Northstar Survey contains questions regarding access for persons with disabilities to the GLBT community, and hopefully this survey will

provide more information.

Task Force Recommendations Concerning Persons with Disabilities

Recommendations

1. Any mandated training for public sector employees must recognize GLBT persons with disabilities as part of the total GLBT community. GLBT persons with disabilities must be positively included by providers doing psychological counseling and educators providing sex education.
2. GLBT businesses and organizations must be more accessible to persons with disabilities.
3. Any future statewide GLBT entity must have a budget allowing it to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

C. Gay and Lesbian Seniors

Information concerning gay and lesbian seniors was presented to the First Governor's Task Force from data collected at a "Conference on Aging in the Gay and Lesbian Communities", held in the Twin Cities area during April, 1990. This information has been used in preparing this report.

The Closet and "Passing"

An increasing number of gay and lesbian seniors are becoming "frail and alone". Elderly lesbians and gay men are among the recipients of all programs provided for the elderly yet their special needs are universally ignored.¹

One of the most pervasive issues for older gay and lesbian individuals is the need to conceal their sexual orientation. Many have lived most of their lives deeply in the closet "passing" as heterosexual. It is not difficult to understand why they have done this. Lesbians and gay men who are in their 70's now were teenagers during the Great Depression. During that time words such as "pervert" and "sexual deviate" were in common usage among even helping professionals when referring to them. In the 1940's and '50's, the teen years of those now in their 60's, World War II and the McCarthy era brought about even greater suppression of homosexuality. For most, the closet was not an option, but a necessity for survival.

Invisibility

This coping mechanism is not without significant costs to one's self-esteem, however. The consequent invisibility of these individuals has also contributed much to the maintenance of erroneous stereotypes about gay and lesbian elderly.

Although we have focused on gay and lesbian seniors who are 60 years of age and older for the purposes of this discussion, it is important to remember that each decade in the gay and lesbian population is quite different from one another. We might make a similar observation when it comes to the discussion of bisexual and transgender seniors, about whom there has been almost nothing written.

Psychological Problems

Older lesbians and gay men have experienced relative success in facing the aging process, yet there are times when environmental demands exceed their ability to cope. These demands frequently lead to psychosocial problems for which many professionals are unprepared, as they work with these individuals. The most common problem areas are: (1) institutional problems, (2) legal problems, (3) emotional needs, and (4) medical needs.

1. Raymond M. Berger, "The Unseen Minority: Older Gays and Lesbians," *Social Work*, May, 1982, pp. 236-242, discusses these and other issues. Much of the following discussion is based on Berger's analysis.

Institutional Problems

Often the policies of various institutions, which provide services for the elderly, create problems for the older lesbian or gay man. Such problems include:

- who is allowed to visit the patient in care facilities,
- who is allowed to participate in decisions regarding treatment,
- allowance for healthy sexual expression between partners in nursing home facilities,
- possible decline in service quality should a patient become identified as gay or lesbian.

Legal Problems

The legal system is woefully ignorant of the needs of lesbians and gay men. In addition, often GLBT individuals themselves poorly understand the ways it creates difficulties and the many ways in which this system might serve them.

Legal issues specific to the seniors of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender communities focus primarily on family matters, money, and death. They are denied the rights and benefits that come with the legal status of marriage. There are, however, some ways all couples can protect their mutually acquired/owned property.

**Family Matters,
Money and Death**

All couples must take care to ensure that their wills, living wills and powers of attorney are drafted and executed in a manner so as to ensure that decisions of health care, guardianship, funeral arrangements, burial, and property distribution are carried out as they wish. If such documents are not in place, the deceased individual's "next of kin" will likely make these determinations. Unlike the situation of heterosexual married couples, where it is presumed such determinations are to be made by the spouse, in the case of GLBT couples, the surviving partner is frequently by-passed, and decisions are made by family members of the deceased individual. The surviving partner's wishes and interests may be totally overlooked.

When one of a couple receives assistance from the federal government for cost of care, (nursing home, long term care facility) the unmarried partner's interest in jointly owned property may become jeopardized. According to current law, the government cannot touch the residence of the spouse of a person receiving benefits for long term cost of care. However, when the property is owned by two unmarried individuals, the government may require sale of the half of the interest in the home belonging to the recipient of assistance.

Denial of Benefits

Older couples are also routinely denied the benefits of insurance. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 72A.20, insurers may consider the marital status of the insured in making determination as to what parties are "dependents" for purposes of coverage. Most employers and insurers presume that married spouses are dependents for purposes of health, life, accidental and wrongful death, and workers' compensation insurance, but would not consider an unmarried partner to be a beneficiary. On a related topic, unmarried partners lack standing to sue for the wrongful death of a partner.

In addition, there are ways in which the denial of the equivalent of marital benefits to same sex couples causes the loss of other substantial benefits which typically grow with the duration of the relationship. For instance, denial of tax benefits compounds over time, the cost of insurance compounds over time and the amount of mutually acquired property grows over time.¹

Emotional Needs

Agencies often provide bereavement counseling, yet may be unprepared to provide such for the surviving partner of a lesbian or gay relationship. In a similar manner, they are also usually unable to help older clients find ways of meeting other gay and lesbian seniors, and they are generally uninformed about the various lifestyles of these individuals.

Medical Needs

Although the popular conception would see older men as asexual, many of them continue to be sexually active well into their later years. As a result, medical professionals should be mindful of problems related to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and know how to respond appropriately.

Recommended Areas of Focus

The following areas deserve special attention:

A. Needs Assessment and Program Development

- Research accurately the numbers of GLBT persons approaching their senior years, and carry out planning for this client population.
- Encourage and financially support continued research about GLBT seniors.
- Develop adequate, sensitive and affirming programming related to housing and day centers for seniors.

1. See the "Legal Issues Committee Report," Report of the Governor's Task force on Lesbian and Gay Minnesotans, March, 1991, for a more complete discussion of these and related matters.

B. Professional Training and Education

- Education related to homophobia and ageism for providers of community services.
- Inservice training for all social service agencies and programs working with seniors, covering issues of GLBT seniors.
- Training and education programs specifically targeted to nursing homes.
- Increased education and awareness about the experience and needs of gay and lesbian seniors within mainstream gerontological associations.

C. Direct Services and Support Groups

- Develop support groups for gay and lesbian seniors, possibly modelled on groups such as G.L.E.A.M. ("Gay and Lesbian Elders Active in Minnesota") especially in Greater Minnesota.
- Develop appropriate and sensitive support groups for handling grief and loss of partners and friends.
- Give attention to the impact of HIV infection in an aging population.

GLBT Seniors as Models for Study

While society has complicated the lives of GLBT seniors, there are ways in which their adjusting to the hurdles placed in front of them and surviving well is worth attention and study. Raymond Berger notes, "But the special strength and advantages of these survivors of a hostile society must not be overlooked, and may, in fact, inform understanding of the aging process in general. Perhaps their greatest strength lies in the ability of older homosexual men and women to join together for mutual aid and support."¹

A Note for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Communities

While this section has focused primarily on the lived experience of gay and lesbian seniors within the broader society, a word must be said about their situation within their own community.

Gay male culture, in particular, has tended to emphasize youthfulness, beauty, and physical prowess. As a result, older gay males often feel marginalized, and their contributions minimized or overlooked. Elders infrequently hold places of honor or respect, and the admission of sexual

Older Gay Men Marginalized

1. Berger, p. 241

interest or activity often relegates them to the unfortunate category of "dirty old men". While such attitudes certainly also exist in the wider community, they have become amplified within the GLBT communities.

A Harmful Stereotype

A more vicious stereotypical misperception is that older gay males who wish to work with GLBT youth are sexual predators. Discouraged from serving as mentors or working on behalf of sexual minority youth, the experience and insight of these individuals, as well as their support and encouragement becomes lost to the youth of the community. Sadly, at a time when GLBT youth most need role models in their lives, older gay males find it almost impossible to participate in the "greening of the next generation". Anecdotal information suggests that these sentiments are far more prevalent towards and more heavily impact gay men than they do lesbian women.

Task Force Recommendations Concerning GLBT Seniors

Recommendations

1. Establish within the Department of Human Services a "working committee on aging and GLBT issues," with the goal of informing mainstream gerontological organizations of the special needs of these populations.
2. Educate public sector employees in the area of aging in the GLBT communities.
3. Require gerontological professionals to obtain Continuing Education Units (CEU's) so they have a demonstrated competence in sexual orientation issues.
4. Find a funding source to support education and information dissemination within the community, as well as the provision of support services.
5. Legalize gay and lesbian partnerships, in order to provide a societal foundation for building families, support, and long term relationships.

See appendix page 95 for additional resources

Chapter 6

Bisexual Persons in Minnesota

Definition

In his 1948 pioneering study of sexual behavior, Alfred Kinsey found that nearly half of all men and about a quarter of all women are not exclusively heterosexual or homosexual in their feelings or behaviors.¹ Since then the term "bisexual" has come to describe those persons for whom neither "heterosexual" nor "homosexual" fully describes their experience. "Bisexual" is defined as "referring to individuals of either sex who are attracted to both sexes emotionally or sexually".²

Some people know they are bisexual at a very young age, while others only discover their orientation as adults. Still others may identify as bisexual for a period of time and later identify as gay, lesbian or heterosexual; or identify as gay, lesbian or heterosexual and later as bisexual.

Invisibility and Discrimination

Bisexual persons live in every community. They raise families, pay taxes, vote and work. They live in traditional and alternative relationships, single and married. Many people assume that they do not know any bisexuals, or assume that every person is heterosexual, gay or lesbian, which contributes to the problem of invisibility.

Lack of Understanding

Bisexuality has been misunderstood, marginalized and/or sensationalized. Bisexuals have been misunderstood because it is difficult for many people to understand those who have the experience of attraction to both men and women. They have been marginalized because it is assumed that there are only a few bisexuals and those few are primarily a "fringe group". They have been sensationalized through focus on bisexuals as oversexualized persons.

Those who choose to live openly are discriminated against in housing, employment practices, accommodations and child custody findings. The "don't ask, don't tell" rule in the U.S. military specifically includes bisexuals. Bisexual youth are highly at risk for suicide and chemical dependency. Bisexual persons are victims of hate crimes and violence. Groups opposed to rights for gay or lesbian persons often oppose rights for bisexuals.

Discrimination against bisexual persons is not limited to heterosexuals. Even though from the beginning of the gay/lesbian liberation movement, there have

1. A.C. Kinsey, W.B. Pomeroy, and C.E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948

2. Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu, eds., Bi Any Other name: Bisexual People Speak Out, Boston: Alyson Publications, Inc., 1991

been bisexuals in leadership roles, they were not recognized and often had to "pass" as gay or lesbian to be accepted. Many bisexual persons report feeling uncertain about which gay and lesbian events welcome them and which they might be asked to leave if their identities were known.

People of any orientation may experience "bi-phobia" which is defined in Bi Any Other Name as "The irrational fear of bisexuality in oneself or others and the distrust and discrimination practiced against us because of this fear."

Progress

Organizations

Gay Community Services sponsored the first organized effort to provide services to bisexuals in Minnesota in 1974. The International Directory of Bisexual Groups now lists eight specifically bisexual and 27 gay/lesbian groups which include bisexuals in Minnesota. Some are centered in the Twin Cities. Others are found elsewhere in the state. Minnesotans have been part of the leadership of national groups like Bi Net--The National Bisexual Network of the United States.

In 1991, the Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council (GLCAC) commissioned the Needs Assessment of the Bisexual Community in the Twin Cities. This was part of a larger effort to specifically include bisexual and transgender people in the work and services of GLCAC. Although this assessment was not a comprehensive representation of all bisexuals in the Twin Cities or in Minnesota, it provides useful information. The report encourages the use of inclusive language because bisexuals often assume that they are either not welcome or should be closeted at an event or organization which is labeled "Gay Men and/or Lesbians".

Rights Protection

Efforts to include bisexuals in human rights efforts in Minnesota and other states have progressed. It is important to note that the legislative intent of the sexual orientation amendment to the Minnesota Human Rights Act includes bisexuals.

Recommendations

In addressing the needs of the bisexual community, the State of Minnesota should:

1. Include the bisexual community in any future statewide entity.
2. Include bisexual issues in education and training of public sector staff.
3. Insure that the Human Rights Act is enforced for bisexual persons.

See appendix page 96 for additional resources

Chapter 7

Transgender Persons

Definition

The transgender community includes all who transgress gender norms, and all others who wish to do so. The Minnesota Human Rights Act defines transgender people as, "...having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness."

Crossing social, economic, political and philosophical lines, its constituents are bound together by a common desire to freely explore and express their gender identities. Some alternate between strongly masculine and feminine presentations, some present as the gender opposite their birth sex, and others blend individual characteristics into an overall image of varying degrees of masculinity and femininity. This spectrum of gender expression embraces great diversity within the community.

The Problem

Negative Stereotypes

Many people have negative stereotypes of transgender people based on images portrayed in X-rated videos and sensationalized TV talk shows. It is many times surprising to learn that most are heterosexual people, with relatively normal lives, who are often married and have children. Transgender people cover a broad scope of individuals. They are found in virtually all areas of society. Only about 5% identify as gay or lesbian, a fact that many find surprising.

Fearful, Alone and Confused

As with other minorities, fear and ignorance often foster prejudice against transgender people. Many live in fear of discovery by a scornful public. They've kept their feelings a secret, even from their closest loved ones. While in the closet, many think they are the only ones in the world with these feelings.

It is not surprising that many transgender people feel this way. Guilt, shame and confusion are the products of a non-accepting and very uninformed public. There is no "cure" for being transgender. The best "treatment" seems to be self-acceptance and the creation of a more knowledgeable and understanding public. Transgender persons living in Greater Minnesota face significantly greater isolation and lack of support and resources than those persons living in the metro areas.

Estimates are that one to five percent of the population are transgender or have these feelings, but only a fraction have learned to accept this special part of their lives. Male to Female transgender people are usually more visible and

noticeable than Female to Male. This is because society has developed certain standards of acceptance, and taboos against men wearing clothing usually reserved for women. They tend to stand out more, especially if they do not "pass" well or are having problems presenting themselves as women. Women, on the other hand, can dress in male clothing and no one gives it a second thought. In fact, many times it is quite fashionable to do so.

Definitions

What follows are some common terms, though not an exhaustive list, which can be used to describe some of the many people who make up this diverse community. As with all terms and definitions, they can vary greatly and be interpreted in many ways. Here are some simple definitions for some very complex types of transgender people.

Transsexuals

Transsexuals are people who feel that they are not the correct gender for their physical body. Most desire to change their body to physically match their gender through hormonal treatment and/or gender reassignment surgery (sometimes called sex reassignment surgery or SRS).

Cross Living People

Cross Living People, sometimes referred to as transgenderist, choose to live and function in the role of the opposite gender full time, yet may not seek gender reassignment surgery. People who seek gender reassignment surgery are typically required to cross live for a year before surgery.

Crossdressers

Crossdressers (transvestites) are people who dress in the clothing usually reserved for the opposite sex, from creating a complete gender image to wearing a single piece of clothing, perhaps hidden under normal attire. Sometimes they might present in parts of some clothing obviously used by both genders. Some dress flamboyantly, but most crossdressers do not. Crossdressers are by far the overwhelming majority of transgender people, but often the most invisible and the most closeted.

The Community

The transgender community boasts a growing network of over 300 regional and national support organizations. These range from small discussion groups to professionally run publishers of gender-related material. In Minnesota there is an organization whose sole mission is to help educate and inform the public about transgender people and issues.

A Varied Group

Virtually every kind of occupation can be found among people in this community. The overwhelming majority of transgender people are private "crossdressers". That is, they limit their dressing to the privacy of their homes and socialize "dressed" only at organization events or private gatherings with other transgender people. They prefer to use the word "crossdresser" because they feel it is more descriptive than the older term "transvestite".

Ignorance

The public's ignorance about transgender people is shared and fostered by the counseling and psychiatric community, who continue to "pathologize" gender identity issues. In fact, transvestism is referred to as a fetish, a kind of paraphilia, by DSM IV, the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, a compendium of standard nomenclature compiled by the APA and World Health Organization.

Of those people who are transgender, fewer than one tenth of one percent identify as transsexuals, or one out of 100,000, with an almost even split between Female to Male and Male to Female. But these are the people most of society think of when they hear the term "transgender." Female impersonators and drag queens and kings are other very visible groups of transgender people, but they too comprise an extremely small percentage of the transgender community. Most transgender people never do come "out of the closet" or go out in public.

The Situation in Minnesota

Minnesota Law

The Minnesota Human Rights Act, chapter 363, protects the rights of transgender persons. It is the first state law in the United States to do so.

Support Services

Gender identity counseling is available at the University of Minnesota, and a handful of other private clinics in the Metro area. In addition to providing counseling to individuals, these clinics provide consultation services to other professionals and to policy makers. Even though transgender people live throughout Greater Minnesota, services and support are sorely lacking in Greater Minnesota (see Chapter 3: Greater Minnesota: Climate and Access).

Transgender Organizations

There are some groups which offer peer support, information on various aspects of transgender living, and social events in safe, comfortable settings. Also, some gay, lesbian, and bisexual organizations are starting to encourage transgender participation and are becoming aware of transgender concerns. These social organizations and activities help some transgender people deal with the extreme shame, guilt and isolation that society places on this closeted community.

Transgender Education and Outreach

The transgender community is very active in trying to educate and inform the public on transgender issues. There is a growing number of presentations and workshops that specifically address transgender issues.

Special Concerns

Counselors/Human Service Workers

Most counselors and human service workers have little knowledge or experience with gender identity issues. In fact, because of this lack of knowledge, transgender people are often damaged in their therapy by mental health professionals. More transgender education is needed in professional

training programs and continuing education seminars. It is important that mental health professionals learn to distinguish among a person's physical sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual behavior, gender presentation and social roles. Additionally, it is essential that mental health professionals learn to work effectively with the concerns transgender persons present. The lack of supportive services for transgender persons is particularly acute in Greater Minnesota.

**Transsexual
Acceptance in the
Workplace**

When transsexuals transition on the job (start to live and work in their new gender role), fellow employees, supervisors, and management many times have a hard time dealing with the changes taking place and the "new" person who is now working with them. Often much focus is placed on exaggerated concerns about whether the cross-living person should use the men's or women's restroom.

Many transsexual people are forced to leave their jobs only because of who they are. Corporations and organizations need to be sensitive to these issues and work within their organization to help foster a greater understanding and acceptance of these individuals. Support services and specific transgender diversity training are sometimes needed if problems continue to exist. There are organizations available within the transgender community which offer these services.

**Transgender
Teenagers**

Few resources are available for transgender teenagers, particularly in Greater Minnesota. Their strong desire to express transgender feelings, combined with their normal insecurities about sex often results in profound confusion and overwhelming feelings of shame and guilt. The suicide rate in the transgender community is high.

Public Policy

Many civic leaders have demonstrated lack of understanding of the issues facing transgender people. This impacts public policy.

**Threats Related to
Funding for Surgery**

During the 1993-94 legislative session, an amendment which would have banned the use of public funding (Medical Assistance and General Assistance Medical coverage) for gender reassignment surgery was successfully attached to the Human Services Bill in both houses of the Minnesota Legislature. It would have gone into effect, but for a gubernatorial veto of the bill.

This issue was reintroduced in 1995. The 1995 Welfare Reform Bill includes the prohibition of General Medical Assistance funding for gender reassignment surgery where services have begun July 1, 1995 or after. Minnesota residents on regular Medical Assistance may still be covered for such services. Supporters of the bill to end funding claimed that this funding represents a misuse of public funds. However, transsexual people are very few in number, and most do not rely on public funding.

Chapter 8

Statewide Entity on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Issues

***Primary
Recommendation***

The state of Minnesota establish, fund and staff a statewide "Council on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Minnesotans" to advocate at all levels of government for GLBT citizens.

Background

The First Governor's Task Force recommended the formation of an on-going entity which would address concerns of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) community. During its city visits the present Task Force asked community members throughout Minnesota if they thought there was a need for some type of organization which would serve GLBT citizens. Most of the respondents agreed that such an entity would have a number of useful purposes such as bringing concerns of the GLBT community to the attention of public officials, linking those who need services with providers, and other kinds of advocacy.

Minnesota presently has a number of councils which represent the interests of various protected classes: Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Council on Black Minnesotans, Council on Disability, and the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council among many others. Other states have had task forces or offices established to work with the GLBT community and state government.

Purpose

The purpose of these entities generally includes acting as a liaison between the various communities and state government, interpreting the community to the state and vice versa, monitoring enforcement of the Minnesota Human Rights Act, and providing support to local organizations which have requested services.

Chapter 9

Organized Religion and the Concerns of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Persons

GLBT Persons in Faith Communities

Like other Minnesotans, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) persons have a wide range of spiritual needs and sensitivities. GLBT persons have always been a part of communities of faith which gather in Minnesota. Until the 1970's that presence received little recognition. GLBT persons remained silent about their identities and their specific concerns were not addressed within religious communities.

In 1978, by referendum, the citizens of St. Paul repealed the section of the St. Paul Human Rights Ordinance which prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Impetus for this repeal came from conservative religious organizations and leaders who openly exploited the homophobic fears of people. The responses of the more moderate religious communities, tempered by institutional and theological concerns, tended toward generalities and ambivalent statements.

Support for GLBT Rights

During the next decade a number of religious groups supported the legal protection of the rights of GLBT persons. The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition brought together the support of the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish Communities. The report of the First Governor's Task Force documented the statements of support from religious leaders and communities. In 1993, the Legislature amended the Minnesota Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation.

The Status of GLBT Persons within Religious Organizations

Uncertain Standing

Several GLBT persons told the Task Force their uncertainty as to their standing within their own religious communities. Even in those communities with supportive positions on human rights there is often ambivalence or silence at the congregational level which prevents self-revelation as GLBT persons or as persons concerned with GLBT issues.

Tensions

The risk of exposure varies. GLBT persons spiritually comfortable with conservative Christian groups fear that self-revelation will place them on the receiving end of moral judgement. In the Latino/Latina community, GLBT persons experience the Church not only as a religious community but also as part of their identity. (See Chapter 5, section A-4.) African-American GLBT persons find the shared life history of their congregations to be an important part of ethnic and personal identity. (See Chapter 5, section A-1.) In such situations GLBT persons will often hide their identities or fail to share their concerns fearing exclusion from their cultural communities.

The ambiguity of simultaneous personal acceptance coupled with institutional bias toward traditional family structures and moral values creates an untenable situation in which only the most courageous would share concerns or identity.

Progress

Supportive Communities

There are, however, some positive developments. Many religious communities have recognized bigotry for what it is and support the rights of GLBT persons. The acceptance of Spirit of the Lakes and Shir Tikvah Congregations by their religious bodies, as well as the experience of "Welcoming Congregations" have provided models of successful inclusion. Religious organizations have opened their doors to meetings and discussions. Many of the Task Force's city visits were held in church buildings.

Challenges

Despite signs of progress, challenges exist. Some religious groups which strongly support human rights for GLBT persons struggle with positions regarding acceptable behavior. Again, faced with moral ambiguities GLBT persons remain silent. Progress in the area of inclusion will come before progress in the area of agreement. There is little chance in the immediate future of agreement on issues of behavior even in religious communities strongly supportive of human rights.

Human encounter with GLBT persons often is lost in the thicket of moral and theological issues. Those who dare to move institutions toward dialogue and discussion are blamed for creating division. The conflict already exists. The question is whether the pain will be borne in silence by a few or shared by many. Discussion creates problems and also presents opportunities. Justice, mercy and community inclusiveness are important values in both religion and politics in Minnesota.

Task Force Observation Concerning Organized Religion

Observation

The Task Force recognizes and appreciates the important and historic role played by religious institutions in fostering dialogue and in helping to frame discussions around controversial and emotional issues. The Task Force suggests that in all aspects of issues facing GLBT persons religious institutions continue to assist them by committing to foster dialogue which attempts to bridge divisions between individuals and groups, and that religious institutions specifically reject and resist efforts which only threaten to further fragment our society.

Chapter 10

Political Climate

Primary Recommendation

Use all means to ensure support of, protection under, and education about existing public policy, including the 1993 Amendment to the Human Rights Act, and oppose attempts to restrict the rights of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender citizens.

Progress

Great strides have been made legally, politically, and publicly for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender citizens. In 1993, Minnesota became the eighth state to include sexual orientation in its Human Rights Act. It is the most inclusive human rights law in the United States because in addition to gays and lesbians, bisexual and transgender citizens are covered.

Many employers, including the University of Minnesota, the Minneapolis Public Schools, St. Paul Companies, NSP, the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, and Cray Research extend benefits such as health, dental, sick and bereavement leave to same sex domestic partners.

Public opinion polls have consistently shown support for equal treatment of individuals regardless of sexual orientation. For example, in a poll conducted by the New York Times/CBS News (March 5, 1993) nearly eighty percent of respondents say that homosexuals should have equal rights as to job opportunities.

Backlash

With this increase in legal and public recognition of, and shift in attitude about GLBT individuals has come a strong anti-gay/lesbian backlash. An Article published in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune (September 24, 1994) quoted an expert on the religious conservative movement from the University of Akron (Ohio), who said he has detected a strategic shift toward fighting against gay rights as a focus for activity in the last year to 18 months. He further went on to talk about how "gay and lesbian rights is a winning issue because the constituency is united on it. It's an easy issue to push."

Although some religious groups hold the views cited above, many religious congregations are supportive of the GLBT community in Minnesota. It was due to the efforts of several groups, notably the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, that the 1993 amendment to the state Human Rights Statute passed. However, in Minnesota there are organized efforts by persons with national connections whose agenda includes the erosion or elimination of the gains made for GLBT citizens. While these groups masquerade as "family value" groups, they are promoting an agenda which is politically motivated and based

on hatred of targeted groups, including GLBT persons.

Attack on Education

Secondary school curricula have been particular targets. In the fall of 1994, the Minnesota Family Council publicly announced that it would use the guidebook for educators, Alone No More as proof that the Minnesota State Department of Education is "promoting" homosexuality. Since then, they have actively worked for the recall of the manual. It should be noted that the manual was funded by the Center for Disease Control as an AIDS prevention resource to be used by health and education professionals. It was neither funded by the Department of Education nor meant to promote a particular lifestyle.

An amendment was unsuccessfully proposed to the 1994 Minnesota Education bill to eliminate funding to any school district where homosexuality was discussed. It was argued that inclusion of the topic in school curricula amounted to the promotion of homosexuality. A similar bill, the Smith/Helms Bill, was defeated in Congress in 1994. Anti-gay/lesbian groups are committed to promoting the passage of legislation which would restrict or eliminate discussion of homosexuality in the schools.

A program of the St. Paul Schools, *Out for Equity*, which offers volunteer counseling and support groups for high school students who are questioning their sexual orientation, *Out for Equity*, has come under attack. The Catholic Defense League has called for an end to the program calling it "an effort to advocate for gay, lesbian, and bisexual lifestyles". (Minneapolis Star Tribune, March 9, 1995)

Civil Rights Issues

Anti-gay lesbian activists have attempted to exploit community fear and ignorance by framing the issue of civil rights protection for GLBT citizens as "special rights". While the GLBT community is simply asking for a legal "even playing field" in the areas of employment, housing, education, public services and public accommodations, the rhetoric of the opposition intentionally plays into cultural stereotypes that gay people want legal protection for a lifestyle which is immoral by some religious standards. Even though most people understand that one's sexual orientation is not a choice, anti-gay/lesbian activists consider homosexuality to be a choice, and claim because it is not an inherent trait such as race or gender, it does not deserve civil rights protection. GLBT citizens and many other individuals have pointed out that even if it were a matter of choice, choice is not a criterion by which civil rights protection is or should be granted. Religion, for example, is typically regarded as a choice, but is protected.

GLBT individuals and issues are targets in the current political climate. As public awareness campaigns crafted by the anti-GLBT movement continue to mislead and misinform the general public, legislation to restrict the rights of GLBT people and to limit the education of young people gains new

momentum. Candidates for public office who have been supportive of GLBT rights have been targets of hate campaigns in their bids for elective office, while those already in public office are often harassed for their support of GLBT rights. The Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council reports hate violence against GLBT people has risen in the last year.

Helpful Steps

While it is still risky for some individuals, coming out is a key to societal understanding. When one GLBT person comes out to a friend, co-worker or family member, the old stereotypes are challenged on a very personal level and are frequently replaced with more positive and realistic attitudes. The Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council reports that in its community education program, participants continually cite the fact that until the training they had never met a GLBT person. After the training, they realized that GLBT people are not much different than they are.

GLBT Minnesotans have long experienced a great deal of support by non-GLBT ally groups and individuals. Support for GLBT rights and GLBT citizens could not occur without this crucial element. GLBT organizations must continue to actively maintain existing connections and proactively search for and build new relationships.

Finally, the GLBT community and its supporters must continue to work together actively for equal treatment of GLBT citizens. It is tempting to assume that the civil rights amendment of 1993 guarantees non-discrimination and safety. However, it does not. Many people are still not supportive of GLBT citizens or their rights. Dialogue on important, and sometimes controversial, community issues and inclusive planning must be encouraged in order to strengthen an already resilient movement for social change.

Appendices

History of the Governor's Task Forces

The First Governor's Task Force. In 1988, Governor Rudy Perpich appointed a Task Force to examine prejudice and violence in Minnesota. One finding was that a majority of all hate crimes were committed against gay and lesbian persons. In response, Governor Perpich then appointed, in April, 1990, the Governor's Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Minnesotans. The charge to that Task Force was to determine if there was discrimination against these Minnesota citizens and if so, to make recommendations to improve their quality of life. The Task Force had no staff and no budget, and no member received any reimbursements or per diem of any kind.

The 16 members of the Task Force represented various communities. They met 40 times, had 22 briefings by 35 presenters, held nine public hearings throughout Minnesota and met with representatives of two cities who came to the Task Force at other sites. The Task Force did not finish its work until after Governor Perpich had left office. Its report was presented in March, 1991, to Governor Arne Carlson who accepted and approved the report. **There were four major recommendations:**

1. Prohibit discrimination against any person because of sexual orientation.
2. Repeal Minnesota laws concerning private, adult, consensual, sexual behavior.
3. Require training in understanding homosexuality for all public sector employees.
4. Establish an ongoing state commission to continue the work of this Task Force.

A bill to amend the Minnesota Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation was offered at the end of the 1991 legislative session but it was defeated in committee.

The Second Governor's Task Force. Governor Carlson agreed to appoint another committee to implement the recommendations of the first Task Force. The 24 members of this Governor's Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans received official letters of appointment in September, 1992, and met on October 10, 1992. These appointees reflected Minnesota's diversity and were drawn from all geographic areas.

This Task Force determined at its initial meeting that the findings of the first Task Force justified the inclusion of issues of concern to bisexual and transgender persons in its mission. The members also determined the need for consultants with expertise in certain topics, and approved the appointment of six non-voting "special advisors" including a legislator and representatives of the bisexual and transgender communities.

The diverse representation on the Task Force itself, plus the consultation of its advisors made it possible to include in the Task Force report issues of concern to GLBT persons who also are persons of color, persons with disabilities, seniors and/or youth. Even so, still more effort is needed to make more particular recommendations for these groups. Some of these findings may be bolstered by the results of the Second Northstar Survey of GLBT Minnesotans, in progress at this writing.

Between October, 1992, and March, 1993, the focus of the Task Force was the implementation of the first recommendation made by the First Task Force, i.e., amending the Minnesota Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation. Task Force members informed and educated people, lobbied legislators and testified in favor of the amendment, which passed in March, 1993, and became law August 1, 1993.

This amendment prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodation, public services, education, credit, business and forbids reprisal against a plaintiff. It protects every person whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or heterosexual. **It is, therefore, the most encompassing state legislation in the nation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.**

The First Task Force report recommended repeal of laws concerning private, adult, consensual, sexual behavior and this is supported as an on-going recommendation by the Second Task Force as well. No legislation regarding these laws was proposed during the existence of this Task Force. Therefore, no specific efforts were made with regard to this issue.

The Task Force then turned its efforts to implementation of the last two recommendations. The need for more information led to city visits throughout Minnesota. The Task Force had great assistance from residents of the cities it visited. Summaries of these visits are included in an appendix.

The Task Force also gathered resources nationwide to provide education and anti-homophobia training. Committee members met with members of various state agencies regarding employee training. Reports of these visits are also included in an appendix.

The First Task Force had recommended creation of a statewide entity to work on issues of concern to GLBT persons. There was intense discussion about the kind of body it should be and the same discussion occurred on the Second Task Force. Information gathered in city visits generally favors such a council or commission.

This report also includes in the appendix lists of resources and publications of interest to GLBT persons, their families, and to professionals who work with GLBT persons.

Language

As the Task Force began its written work, language became very important. Every minority community has experienced an evolution in terminology as times change. Which words would appropriately identify persons referred to in this report? After intense discussion, the Task Force members agreed on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) persons.

Some Task Force members preferred the term "sexual minorities" or "sexual orientation minorities". But members had concerns that "sexual minorities" could be interpreted to mean persons engaging in criminal sexual behavior, while others argued that "sexual minorities" held the same kind of power one finds in other groups who have been accepted as "minorities", e.g., racial or ethnic minorities. "Sexual orientation minorities" was simply too confusing.

Some members thought "queer" was a better choice, because it was a way of reclaiming language that was used against people in the past. But "queer" is used primarily within the GLBT community, and only by portions of it. Sentiment was also strong that the "straight" community would find "queer" offensive and/or confusing.

In the past the terms "homosexual" and "homophile" have referred to both men and women. In the immediate post-Stonewall period "gay" was the term of choice for activists of both sexes. More recently, the words "lesbian" and "gay" have been used to specify a woman and a man. The terms "bisexual" and "transgender" reflect the increased visibility of persons of these orientations within the community and acknowledgement by the community of their contributions to it.

Task Force members agreed that "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender" (GLBT) most specifically listed the groups included in the Human Rights Amendment and so is the most appropriate language for this report.

REPORT OF CITY VISITS: WINONA AND RED WING (12-13 NOVEMBER 1993)

I. INFORMATION/OBSERVATIONS: WINONA SEXUAL MINORITY COMMUNITY

- Winona is a city where religious groups have considerable influence. They are well organized and are very vocal in their opposition to gay and lesbian issues and individuals. Although religious opposition is informally organized, they have a strong network which utilizes "The Penpoint" (weekly newsletter) to organize their responses to issues (e.g. they were able to draw several hundred participants for the second School Board Meeting relating to the question of a gay/lesbian sensitive poster in the high school). They are also able to turn out large groups for "candlelight vigils." Only a few religious leaders in Winona could be viewed as supportive of sexual minority issues. The poster has not been replaced in the school, despite a School Board vote of 4-3, in favor of retaining.
- High schools encourage multiculturalism, but this does not include sexual minorities. Sexual minority students are seeking a social place, but there is none. They do not want to be seen attending an Awareness Program because of the risk. Students and others in the sexual minority community are able to find one another mostly through "luck." The Women's center and a local coffeehouse are "gay-friendly spaces." Students will probably need to empower themselves, and parents are a key element to improving the situation for youth. The sexual minority community, itself, must become better organized.
- Sexual minority people need resources which are not centered in the Twin Cities Metro Area. It is important to be able to use and build on existing resources in Winona. Could a statewide resource have regional expressions, which piggyback on local groups? Since many people have varying degrees of "outness," there is a greater emphasis on meeting social needs, rather than "social action."

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Survey sexual minority people to identify needs.
- Every school in the State should be required to have an "Awareness Program." This will take the pressure off local School Boards.
- There should be a mandate by the State requiring all teachers to participate in "sensitivity training," and such training should be part of certification requirements. A resource list must be developed, describing resources and people competent to provide training in the area of sexual minorities.
- The MN Department of Education should have a full time staff person to assist school districts regarding sexual minority issues.
- Funding from the State is necessary, especially to help underwrite programs addressing the social

needs of sexual minority citizens. A General Grant Program (with monies earmarked on a regional basis) is necessary to assure access to social, legal, and educational programming.

III. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: WINONA COMMUNITY LEADERS MEETING

- Winona is a hostile and unfriendly environment. Only 1 student is comfortable being "out." Questionnaires receive hostile responses. Although education is viewed as critical to attitude change, little has been accomplished in this area. There are few books in the library on this issue. The general openness of sexual minority people/issues has created a backlash. People are now afraid to say anything, because those who say anything publicly receive a negative reaction.
- The local Human Rights Commission has limited ability to assist, since their budget is minimal and they have no staff. Leadership from the religious community is lacking. Clergy are unable to even discuss the issue privately amongst themselves. There is considerable theologically based gaybashing in the "letters to the editor." Religious communities need to have more dialog about sexual minority issues, but this is hindered by polarization and the unwillingness of conservative Christians to participate in the discussion. Churches have an important role to play in teaching respect for diversity and speaking out about discrimination, harassment, prejudice, and violence, even if they are unwilling to accept Winona's sexual minority citizens. "The issue is less what people think about homosexuality, and more how they relate to one another." There is considerable disregard for sexual minority people. People need to learn how to live together and not treat one another poorly.
- It is an act of courage to be visible in Winona. Sexual minority people need role models. If G/L unions were legalized, these relationships would serve as models for both sexual minority citizens and the broader community.
- Education is a key component to change in Winona. Education helps us think ourselves into new ways of acting. Attitudes need to be more open if quality services are to be provided. It would help to have a "legal mandate" regarding training.
- Since Winona State University is NOT dependent upon the local community for financial support, they are able to be more progressive on issues of diversity. The Student Senate needs to support this issue before students in general will be supportive ("since students reach students"). There is considerable "gaybashing" in the dorms," and RA's need antihomophobia training. Sexual minority topics could be introduced if students are involved in the planning. Student leaders give permission to other students to discuss these issues. Many people are frightened to be seen as trying to learn about sexual orientation issues.
- Junior High School teachers are not comfortable with the issue, and although they discuss diversity, sexual orientation is not included. There is fear of being labelled "liberal" if you support gay rights, and there is a backlash if you are identified as associated with people who put on gay/lesbian activities.
- People need to discuss issues such as sexual orientation in their "peer groups," and there needs to be a way to pull "underrepresented people" together. Education professionals could assist in identifying issues and responses. Grassroot efforts are the best way to initiate changes. People do

not like mandates from above. Resources should be available to assist in organizing and education, and not concentrated in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There should be an educational effort to promote respect for the human rights of all people, including sexual minority people. There should be materials available for individuals who think that they might be gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
- The State could begin by legalizing gay and lesbian unions. Then churches might follow in turn. Sexual minority people would also have more visible and positive models for their relationships.
- The State must be clear in saying that sexual minority people must be treated fairly. And the State could provide training on sexual minority issues for community and student leaders. Laws and leadership from the State could take some of the pressure off local people, and the Governor should encourage laws which make it safe for all people in the State. Laws set a context for moving in the right direction.
- It would be helpful to have more than one State Department/Agency take leadership. The local Winona Human Rights Commission needs staff, financial support, resources, and enforcement power. Funding should be made available from the State to correct these situations.
- Programs and funds should be focused in regional centers, NOT in the Twin Cities. Monies should be designated for use only in certain geographical areas so as to eliminate competition with the Twin Cities Metro Area.
- The previous Governor's Task Force Report, and any report from this Task Force, should filter down to local Human Rights Commissions. There need to be more conferences or meetings such as these "City Visits."

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: RED WING SEXUAL MINORITY COMMUNITY MEETING

- Red Wing is a fearful place for women, especially since they tend to have low-paying jobs, and fear losing them if discovered to be lesbian or bisexual.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There is a need for greater visibility of sexual minority issues. The issues should be discussed in schools; resources listed in phone books. "We need to let people know that something is out there for them."
- We need to have an outreach program to help reach people. There should be some sort of direction for this from the State.
- The library needs current and up-to-date information on sexual minorities.

- A state program with regional offices, and staffed by locally committed people will be necessary to help move this issue in Red Wing.

III. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: RED WING COMMUNITY LEADERS MEETING

- Homosexuality is not discussed in Red Wing. It is only talked about by people who trust one another. It is very controversial to bring this discussion or the issue into the schools. However, there is considerable harassment of boys in grade school (being called "fag"). The schools are not even enforcing their position against harassment based on race or ethnic origin. Other speakers felt good about the stands taken in school about name-calling; and there is a policy in place that prohibits discrimination. We still need to assist local residents, however, who are the victims of sexual harassment.
- Lesbians fear losing their jobs and children if they become identified in the public mind. Consequently, there are few individuals (men or women) who are willing to get a group started to support one another.
- It is very painful to be a gay/lesbian/bisexual adolescent in Red Wing. You are alone and there is no support. It is too risky for a student to come out in the Red Wing High School. "Nobody comes out in this community!!" There is a distinctly visible gay community, across the river in Ellsworth, Wisconsin, yet there is a specific fear of oppression in the local YMCA. "What we need is an environment free of hostility, and we need to start the educational program in kindergarten. How families are defined is also an issue (especially with the YMCA) and there should be some form of training for all people, especially in the schools and community."
- The sexual minority community itself needs to become more proactive, with a new emphasis and a new direction.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- This Task Force might assist in offering a series of discussion groups or other supportive programs on sexual minority issues. It is easier when such programs are part of a broader series. One specific topic should be: what the new Human Rights Amendment means.
- The City of Red Wing should apply for an "enforcement agent" for the Human Rights Commission. Such a person might be shared between other communities in the area. Consultants should also be available locally (not just investigators).
- There should be training and workshops available for many kinds of professionals who received no training in college on sexual minority issues. Resources might be made available through the MN Department of Education. The creation of policy helps to initiate discussion.
- Local government should begin using "inclusive language," sponsor/engage in sensitivity training. A local committee or task force might be initiated by city government to help get people discussing sexual minority issues. Such an effort gives people permission to talk. Someone needs to spearhead

this broad effort. . .perhaps appointed by the Governor.

- The Sodomy Statute should be repealed.
- There needs to be a place where sexual minority people can go outside the local community...such as a regional center. The Star Network might be used.

Prepared by: Leo Treadway, Team Leader, Winona/Red Wing City Visit
2 December 1993

REPORT OF CITY VISITS: MANKATO AND ALBERT LEA (JANUARY 21-22 1994)

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: MANKATO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- The communities of Mankato and St. Peter are greatly influenced and dominated by their college populations. They account for most of the numbers of people openly and actively involved in the sexual minority community. So much so, that a "town/gown" split exists, creating barriers to socializing and cooperation. Most of those present at this meeting were from the college environment, representing both faculty and students.

Many of the events and anecdotes described in the meeting related to activism on campus, where a number of students are trying on many levels to effect change. Although most acknowledged some positive changes in local attitudes following the passing of the State Human Rights bill, nevertheless there is a good amount of active opposition to any efforts to promote G/L/B/T visibility and toleration. There are students who are actively harassed, in some cases forced to leave the college due to unrelenting persecution. College administrators are apparently working on following up on harassment and all these issues in general; but many students see this as lip service and judge the official response to be lax. Students end up needing to do everything themselves. Getting nondiscriminatory clauses put into official policy is an upward climb.

- In terms of the non-college environment, there is very little sense of a "community", and there are much fewer opportunities for socializing or mutual recognition amongst G/L/B/T people. Most events are oriented toward women only, an example being the occasional women's dances. And with regard to being active in the community, many lesbians in town eschew political discussion amongst themselves. Thus opportunities of every sort are very limited. What events there are get advertised through word-of-mouth channels, and via circles of friends.

- Overall, although some attitudes have been changing and progress is being made, efforts by G/L/B/T people to promote tolerance and educate others in the Mankato/St. Peter area have stirred up active and vocal opposition. Consequently, G/L/B/T people have backed off a little, and many see wisdom in remaining quiet and closeted. Certain organizations have even decided not to be political. Nevertheless this all is taking place in a context where G/L/B/T people are forging ahead and delving into other areas: for example, a center in town has just hired an openly gay man whose duties include dealing with same-sex domestic abuse and hate crimes.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to the Task Force tended to follow certain themes: mandates for education and training, funding, and drawing upon local talents and resources.

- Mandate a G/L/B/T curriculum in schools, preferably from elementary school onwards. Schools need to be aware of the needs of G/L/B/T youth. There is a real need for books in the libraries.
- There must be sensitivity training for all those who deal with the public as their profession: police, health workers, etc.
- There should be coordinators for some State agency divided up by counties: their duties would be to administrate State policy on these matters, provide education, and to generally act on behalf of G/L/B/T people. Such an agency must be ongoing, with salaried workers. In any event, a certain amount of money must be earmarked specifically for greater Minnesota, rather than having everything handled out of the Twin Cities.

III. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: MANKATO LEADERS MEETING

- In Mankato there is a set of tensions and conflicting desires, all of which add up to frustration on every side: the police want to report hate crimes, but public perception that they are insensitive means that few people report hate crimes as such; police are chastised for assuming a person's gay, and blamed for not reporting an incident as a bias crime. One city council member complained that encouraging the reporting of hate crimes leads to a bad image of Mankato, which means they get encouraged not to report them; not reporting them gives them the image of not caring. This official also claimed there is less resistance to pro-G/L/B/T action than everyone thinks. But by the same token everyone agreed that although there is a lot of support "in spirit" (for example, in the school system), nevertheless no official action is taken. Schools include a kind of emphasis on "peace and support" in their curriculum, but to mention G/L/B/T people specifically would raise a huge ruckus...consequently nothing is said.
- Concern was expressed regarding the place of Mankato and its official structures with respect to the state and the surrounding areas. First, mention was made of the local human rights commissions (Mankato and St. Peter): on the one hand, human rights commissions either receive no money, or have no jurisdiction, or both. Therefore how can they be expected to accomplish anything? On the other, they often find that to have jurisdiction and responsibility means having heavy liability. So state-level help is more desirable. Second, Mankato not only finds itself expected to serve the greater outlying areas, but is also bombarded by very conservative elements in these outlying areas who try to influence purely Mankato matters. This is especially the case with G/L/B/T issues.
- Finally the issues of the "town/gown" split was raised again. Those community members who do try to get involved and active in G/L/B/T matters usually turn out to be affiliated with the colleges, thus accentuating the town/gown tension. All in all there is a lot of frustration and a feeling of little progress. Even now, there is little public awareness that there are G/L/B/T people in Mankato at all. or that a State human-rights law has been passed.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There is a need for a clearinghouse. People need to be able to connect with groups that are actually working and doing something. A clearinghouse would also provide information about things like grants. All of this would eliminate the excuse that local community members have no information or funding.
- Mandates are needed for education and training. This could be part of licensure requirements for human service agencies, police, etc. Mandates are important because they force institutions to think about what they're doing. However, education is equally needed.
- There need to be consequences or penalties for those who do not fulfill these licensure requirements. As it is now, there is no follow up on reporting hate crimes or on who has undergone sensitivity training.
- We need books on G/L/B/T issues in the libraries (school and public).
- Local human rights commissions need to be linked to State HR commissions. Funding is essential!

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: ALBERT LEA COMMUNITY MEETING

- The attitudes expressed by the Albert Lea community members (who also included some from Austin, Rockwell, and Rochester) were overwhelmingly those of despair and desperation. All of the stories and anecdotes told to the Task Force were examples of their efforts being crushed, ignored, publicly condemned by officials, and so on. One striking example from Austin regarded a member of the Human Rights Commission: vocally anti-G/L/B/T, he regularly publishes incendiary letters to the editor and does not believe there needs to be a separation between his views as a citizen and those as a human rights commissioner. This goes for other commissioners in the area too, generally being retired farmers who see every issue as a moral one to be viewed through the lens of the Bible. Some other remarks about the climate in the Albert Lea area:
 - PFLAG is no longer active in Albert Lea.
 - There is no such thing as an "out" person; everything is secretive and confidential.
 - There are no publicly supportive people or institutions. Those who do encourage compassion for people with AIDS, for example, receive heated backlash. The performance of "Amazing Grace" was denounced by local preachers.
- On the whole, everyone agreed that the existence of the State Human Rights law means nothing with respect to the realities of life for G/L/B/T people in the Albert Lea area. Mentioning sexual orientation in schools is absolutely avoided, for fear of being accused of "recruiting" the kids, who cringe even at the word "masturbation". As a result of all this disappointment and feelings of failure, local G/L/B/T people get satisfied with less and less: most are pleased with having only one or two close friends they can be out to.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Mandate comprehensive sexuality education in the schools. There must also be sensitivity training for teachers and social services professionals.
- There must be some kind of peer groups or peer networking for G/L/B/T youth, due to the great danger of suicide.
- With no local PFLAG, there needs to be some kind of resource for parents. Parents are afraid of relatives in outlying areas finding out their kids are not straight, which would be an embarrassment...parents are scared, and the secrecy causes much stress.

III. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: ALBERT LEA LEADERS MEETING

- A representative from the Crime Victim Center talked about the frustrations in her job as advocate for victims of crime. The Center is a part of the county government, and does anti-homophobic training as well as serving G/L/B/T victims of crimes. But even within her own building, she is personally made fun of for helping gay and lesbian victims. The local attitude toward bashing is: "So what?" Thus she often ends up having to defend herself for doing her job. Within the Center, she finds that volunteers don't even understand what the word "homophobia" means, but through the screening process she is able to select "supportive" applicants. The Center has much contact with the police, both on the investigative side and through the officers who serve on its advisory board. She finds that although G/L/B/T victims of crime do call in to report bias-motivated incidents, the police never do. Officers on the board are ambivalent about their duties there because of the Center's support for G/L/B/T victims of crime; their attitudes reflect the force as a whole, which is very negative toward G/L/B/T people. When confronted by their negative approaches, the police are unresponsive.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Mandates for sensitivity training and education are needed. Since voluntary attendance at training workshops does not work (especially police), penalties should be instituted to compel them to go.
- There should be a person appointed to deal with local sexual minority services. People need to have access to information "so they can find out where to get help".

REPORT OF CITY VISITS: DULUTH AND VIRGINIA (11-12 MARCH 1994)

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: VIRGINIA

- Virginia is a small community on the Iron Range where, as one woman at our city visit noted, the people live in a mindset which predates the events 10 years ago in Duluth (alluding to a city official who publicly advocated the death sentence for gay people). Life can be difficult for anyone on the Iron Range, but sexual minority people clearly must endure more than their fair share of hardship; for unlike a city like Albert Lea which is experiencing a decline in hope and social change, such things are virtually nonexistent to begin with in Virginia. The recent victory by Cloquet

students allowing a minister and his gay son to speak at a high school was said to be "impossible" in Virginia.

- There are very rigid sex roles and terrific pressure to socially conform: local citizens pointed out the lack of men at the meeting, and said it was much more difficult to be a gay/bisexual man in this region. One of the 23 men present said his gay male friends were amazed at his "bravery" for attending the city visit meeting. Many people were too frightened to even attend the preliminary planning meeting, much less the official one.
- Generally there is disbelief that G/L/B/T people even live in the city. One sympathetic minister wondered what G/L/B/T could do in Virginia, since there aren't any gay bars. On the other hand, when the existence of sexual minority people is recognized, there are a couple of responses: one, sympathetic citizens do not want anyone to rock the boat, sometimes for fear of having suspicion directed upon themselves. The daughter of one lesbian begged her not to "let the Task Force do anything". Two, there are overt threats and voices of hostility. One lesbian had young men regularly drive by her house and shout "lesbian bitch". Local religious institutions have their own problems, even when they are sympathetic: one minister found that attendance dwindled and members left when there was even discussions held about the recent ELCA statement on sexuality.
- Regarding the local school system, citizens commented that anything aside from heterosexuality was very taboo. And considering their attitudes, certain teachers and counselors should not even be working there. One anecdote illustrates this: when a woman from the Minnesota AIDS Project was delivering a presentation on HIV and said "she" in reference to her partner, the teacher ended the presentation on the spot and had students write down their feelings about such a thing not about a deadly virus like HIV, but that the lecturer had said "she".
- Citizens expressed frustration that they felt unable to go to the police to report things like harassment. One man asked how they could approach the police, when "the police themselves go up and harass the Indians on the res[ervation]". And when he heard a local minister was going to perform a private blessing ceremony for a female couple, one deputy sheriff claimed he was going to personally break up the ceremony. The bias crime training required by State law has not occurred in Virginia because no money has been allocated for it. And the local Human Rights commission has not met in approximately two years.
- When efforts are made by individual citizens to find information or organize presentations, they are often hampered by the lack of resources. Many have never heard of the G&L Community Action Council, or of PFLAG. Books dealing with G/L/B/T issues are rare in libraries, not only because some librarians are afraid to spend tax dollars on them, but they have the power to stall book orders. When resources are found, they are usually based in Duluth and other larger cities: this creates resentment, and sometimes local people will use outside resources in order to "protect" local confidentiality.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- State guidelines for multiculturalism must include sexual orientation.

Appendix

- There is a strong need for easily accessible information in the schools, both for parents and students.
- Public awareness on this issue in general and knowledge of resources in particular is needed. Sensitivity training for State and public employees.
- There should be uniform requirements/guidelines for libraries in terms of what G/L/B/T books every library should have.
- There must be local resource people on the Range, not merely in Duluth. Their duties, which would be state-funded, would include accumulating information, making referrals, and assisting in the planning of local efforts.

I. INFORMATION AND OBSERVATIONS: DULUTH COMMUNITY

- Duluth cannot be described without referring to its "twin city" Superior, Wisconsin, where many Duluthians work. In Duluth great differences between the viewpoints of city officials became obvious. In Superior, the mayor is very supportive of and receptive to the concerns of G/L/B/T people. There, a volunteer police officer acts as the unofficial liaison between them and the city. But in Duluth, citizens spoke badly of their own mayor, and expressed frustrations with many of his actions.
- On the City Human Rights Commission, the mayor has refused to appoint openly G/L/B/T members. In addition, he withdrew his personal support of the Mayor's Task Force on Racism when the task force broadened its view to include G/L/B/T people. He refused to sign a proG/L/B/T proclamation, the only one amongst countless proclamations (in a rubberstamp process) to be turned away. After the passage of the State Human Rights Bill in 1993, the mayor declared he did not consider G/L/B/T people a "legitimate" minority, because he believed they "choose their lifestyle".
- In the school system there is generally no awareness of the need to support sexual minority children...but, the school board did not hesitate to forbid students from making an announcement concerning National Coming Out Day over the p.a. system. In this situation, the board acknowledged discomfort with the existence of this issue, and said they were concerned about the reaction of conservative parents if they had allowed it.
- Citizens expressed frustration and disappointment with the Duluth police department. Contrary to the better situation in Superior, Duluth police have received no sensitivity training. A lesbian who regularly listens to the police airwaves (on the "scanner") at home heard officers joke about a domestic dispute between two gay men which they had been sent to resolve. And furthermore, one gay citizen said he had "received flak" from police for wanting to report numerous incidents of anti-gay vandalism against him as bias incidents.
- In general, citizens present said although more people seem to have come out, there has really not been much of a change since the passing of the Human Rights Bill. Many people have never heard of the bill, and for all that, many gay people have never heard of agencies like GLCAC. So the sexual minority community itself finds difficulty getting information. There is no community

agency remotely comparable to something like GLCAC in Duluth.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Licensing requirements for teachers should include sensitivity training.
- There must be a statewide effort directed at children, with measurable results in mind. G/L/B/T youth need access to support groups.
- A state-directed effort must include funding, publicity, and regional offices or branches which can deal more effectively and quickly with local concerns. These satellite agencies must be run by G/L/B/T people. There need to be identifiable, ongoing offices for these efforts, rather than a collection of individual, unconnected ones.

Prepared by Ben Dykes, Minneapolis

REPORT OF CITY VISITS: ROCHESTER AND NORTHFIELD (8-9 APRIL 1994)

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATION: ROCHESTER COMMUNITY

- Instead of being confronted with a generalized feeling of animosity toward G/L/B/T people, Rochester has found itself in the middle of an organized drama of good/evil: there is a group in town called Rochester Supporters of ValueBased Programs (RSVP) which has arisen since last August and seeks to squash efforts on behalf of G/L/P/T people. While citizens cited a rise in the number of people willing to be "out and open", RSVP has been very successful in campaigning publicly in order to set the local citizenry against social change. RSVP also enjoys a certain amount of influence, in that one of their members sits on the Human Rights Commission. They are also running a single issue campaign for County Commissioner. One anecdote illustrates their influence: the local Gay/Lesbian Community Services wanted the City Council's sanction for an education forum for the city government; the hoops they were required to go through were many. When RSVP caught wind of the program, they wrote just one letter of complaint and were immediately granted a 20 minute presentation opposing GLCS, to "give the other side". They were not required to supply a list of anti-gay speakers, and did not entertain questions. Objections by GLCS to this were ignored.
- It is easy in Rochester to find G/L/B/T resources: they are printed clearly in the phone book. But the only really central resource in town is the GLCS, which organizes occasional dances and acts as a kind of clearinghouse. The dances draw people in from hundreds of miles away, due to the lack of such events elsewhere. In addition, they run an informal coming out group. The office space for GLCS is donated; they have no steady income but must rely wholly on donations. There are no other public gathering spots. Nevertheless there are certain other organizations and people who are supportive. The Rochester chapter of PFLAG is very active with many members, and the chief of police is perceived as supportive. The Human Rights Commission has openly gay individuals on it.
- Regarding schools, the school board does not support efforts on behalf of sexual minority students. Recently a student support group was initiated, and the school board made it very clear that they are not related to the group. Consequently certain PFLAG members and GLCS people

have gotten involved in running it. Teachers are vigilant in confronting racism, but otherwise they fall short with respect to homophobia. Thus, students may be harassed without fear of punishment. One recent incident shows this problem: there was an openly gay male student from Denmark staying with a Rochester family through a formal exchange program. He was faced with a lot of "flak" from his host family when they discovered he was gay, and he found hostility at school both from staff and other students, who harassed him. Finally he was removed from the school until gay students demanded his return. At present he still gets death threats over the phone. Clearly a rude awakening, for a citizen of Denmark.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There needs to be more muscle behind certain existing state efforts (e.g. the Dept. of Education workbook, Alone No More). The fulfillment of mandates needs to be linked with the funding various entities receive.
- Teachers need more education and training, especially on issues like depression and suicide, which are effects of homophobia. Educational tools are important: manuals, brochures, etc.
- There need to be consistent, centralized sources of funding for all these efforts. Using local people is essential. The State must help with resources, but local people know what is best for their area.
- There must be an official liaison/coordinator supplied by the State.

III. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: ROCHESTER COMMUNITY LEADERS

- IBM and the Mayo Clinic are the largest employers in the area: most citizens work for them in one respect or another. But how could the employees of such prestigious companies (whose jobs require high intelligence) believe the outrageous propaganda of hate groups like RSVP? This is to ignore the fact that for every doctor and nurse, there are 10 people who take out the garbage and do otherwise low paying jobs. Thus, although most people work for IBM and the Mayo Clinic only about 30% are highly educated. This explains why a few people are able to manipulate the perceptions of an audience largely uninformed about G/L/B/T people. And it is a mistake to equate extensive technical training with being supportive. There is also a reluctance on the part of most sexual minority people, professional or not, to "dirty their hands" by getting involved in politics.
- A candidate for City Council suggested that G/L/B/T people try using some of the same stealthy strategies as RSVP does to sway public opinion. But such hate groups feed on ignorance: hence the problem of waging war stealthily, when ignorance needs to be publicly confronted.
- The City Council directs G/L/B/T people to the State for help. This is puzzling, since the Council has always mirrored the State's decisions in matters like human rights. But in the case of sexual minority people, the effort to include sexual orientation in the City's human rights ordinance has failed. All the same, Citizens said that G/L/B/T people are more restricted than excluded.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The local gay organizations need more help than Human Rights Commissions.
- Conservative, outlying areas need to be educated. People there need to know the law protects them.
- Link mandates for sensitivity training with licensure.
- There must be state encouragement to get schools to admit it's their duty to protect and educate students.

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: NORTHFIELD COMMUNITY

- The passage of the State Human Bill in August has not had much effect on the minds of the people of Northfield. As one person pointed out, having such a law doesn't mean you can't lose your reputation, or have people stop frequenting your business, if you are openly gay. It does not encourage the local HIV Task Force to discuss homophobia, which is now a taboo topic there.
- Citizens cited a problem with policies on family leave. In Northfield, federal medical leave was only extended to "friends" after much opposition to "domestic partners"; thus if it is your partner, you need to keep quiet about it. There is a similar problem in the MN definition of "family" for insurance benefits. There seem to be a number of problems with employers in Northfield besides these: employers generally don't like to admit they have sexual minority employees, and harassment between co-workers goes unchecked. In one alarming incident, a local lesbian committed suicide because of the difficulties of working at her company. She had grown more despondent as the harassment increased and was constantly ignored by the employer.
- The climate in local schools tends to be dismal. There is a reluctance to teach sex education, much less educate students on G/L/B/T issues. For helping professionals who wish to do work in this area, there are special problems. There are legal ramifications for social workers who do referrals for gay youth when they are minors, and in general they are reprimanded for doing such referrals in the first place. There are furthermore few professional resources around: one young lesbian who was removed out of a group for being sexual with another young woman now has no where to go, and must turn to city resources. On another occasion, when the mother of a girl in a sexual abuse support group discovered the group was run by a lesbian, she withdrew her daughter. With no other support groups around, the only one who lost in this case was the girl. Fortunately, there is a large chapter of PFLAG, and sexual minority issues are supported by the Unitarian Universalists and certain other youth groups. The local paper is also sympathetic. And recently, a number of local counselors and school nurses have been meeting to help each other in their mutual efforts. Now some have found the courage to make referrals and move ahead in their respective work surroundings.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

- There must be ways for youth to meet together. There are none now outside of the college. There must be support for the youth in outlying areas. There should be a commission on gay youth.

- The issue should be framed in the schools as one of job preparation: many large corporations are ahead of others in this whole arena, and preparing students for the diversity in the work force is a desirable goal.
- The State should encourage schools to take an active role in talking about G/L/B/T people.
- This is an educational and a health matter: education mandates by the respective State Departments.
- The definition of "family" must be changed.

III. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: NORTHFIELD COMMUNITY LEADERS

- When sexual minority people are out of sight, they are out of mind. When people are not out and open, they do not get harassed. But, for example, one lesbian in town is also "invisible" to her neighbors. They do not make an issue out of her being a lesbian, but they also make no effort to get to know her. In a similar vein, the local senator who voted for It's Time Minnesota received flak, but not because he voted for it: rather, because he was vocal in his support. One young gay man was told by an officer that gay public displays of affection are considered "problems," like theft and vandalism.
- The Unitarians and the United Church of Christ are supportive. Other religious institutions are more tentative and reluctant, especially the ministerial association. On one occasion, the UCC had two lesbian ministers come to talk about ministering to G/L/B/T people. This was approved by church authorities under the condition that someone well-versed in the Lutheran Church position on sexuality be given equal time to speak. But no such person could be found. The presentation by the lesbians was therefore cancelled.
- In the schools there is a lot of fear on the parts of professionals who would help G/L/B/T students. For fear of being blamed and seen as responsible for corrupting youth, they do not notify parents of at-risk students.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There needs to be more help for youth.
- There must be accessible, nonconfrontative information in the form of manuals, brochures, resource booklets. Target audiences: teachers, religious organizations, the general public. The state should be providing mediators, liaisons, and educational tools to work with.
- G/L/B/T people must have the right of marriage.
- We need state support for local people to conduct training for the general public as well as city employees.

Prepared by Benjamin Dykes, Minneapolis

REPORT OF CITY VISITS: BEMIDJI (May 4, 1994)

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATIONS: BEMIDJI COMMUNITY

- Bemidji is similar to many communities in Minnesota in that the social climate encourages G/L/B/T people to hide and live in fear of exposure and subsequent persecution. People live in the closet, and get used to it: their whole lives are built up around it, and are defined by it. Local citizens pointed out two facts which result from this: one, most people are unaware of community resources for G/L/B/T people and legislative changes; two, people cannot be expected to be as productive citizens as they could be, while they are living in a climate of fear. Among the few welcoming places in the Bemidji area are a couple of churches, and those things connected with higher education. The blue-collar job sector is rather bad, and lower education (high school and below) is abysmal.
- The police in Bemidji receive few calls from sexual minority citizens about G/L/B/T related issues. This is because most sexual minority citizens fear exposure. This fear is compounded by the fact that (according to citizens present) there are no directions for the police on dealing with hate crimes; no procedures to follow; and no encouragement to move forward with such actions. As a consequence to this and the climate of hiding, few people are even aware there is a hate crimes statute on the books. One man related a story about a time he had been burglarized. He had brought in items to the police to be fingerprinted, as they had promised to use it all as evidence. But one of the items was a gay periodical: upon seeing this, the police set it all aside and never went ahead with the fingerprinting.
- In the local school system, students who are harassed for being G/L/B/T are blamed for the teasing they receive. Those who seek counseling and help from adult professionals do not receive help, and the attitudes of school administrators are not very positive. This is to be contrasted with the vigilance regarding those who tease Native American students: in those cases, punishment is swift. Certain teachers would like to address G/L/B/T issues in the schools, but they fear for their jobs. As one person at the meeting pointed out, adolescence is when kids need to talk honestly about sexuality the most; but sexual minority youth learn they are supposed to hide their own questions. Thus, they would also be very reluctant, if not completely unwilling, to attend a support group if it were offered under the school's aegis.
- HIV is not a topic addressed very openly in Bemidji. Only one doctor freely admits to working with it. In fact, people generally deny there is HIV in Bemidji. In this way, sexual minority people who are HIV-positive are doubly isolated. And for fear of being outed, HIV-positive citizens are reluctant to attend HIV support groups.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- An ongoing partnership with the State is needed so we do not "lose ground". We need someone on our side, and it must be proactive, not reactive.
- There needs to be a clear law or mandate making it safe to implement the necessary programs and changes in schools and elsewhere.

Appendix

- School administrators must know it is their responsibility to ensure the safety of sexual minority students.
- The ongoing state partnership could offer an 800 number; act as a clearinghouse for information; and identify local community resources for citizens.
- Right wing conservatives like the Moral Majority have huge training packets which they distribute to their supporters; we need something like that to help us.
- Mandates for schools and other official bodies need to be clear, not vague.

I. INFORMATION and OBSERVATION: BEMIDJI COMMUNITY LEADERS

- The Governor's Task Force's last visit to Bemidji prompted the creation of Delta Phoenix, a local G/L/B/T organization. This organization even carries advertisements in the local paper. But although Delta Phoenix is well known, citizens pointed out that many of the people in the room would not have met today without this latest visit by the Task Force. This underlines the problem in getting information to all G/L/B/T people, even in smaller communities. Not everyone is united by the same ideology, or social circles. Most remain hidden from everyone else. There are, however, other places where people might have met: PFLAG is not well attended, but there is the opportunity for growth. The last Take Back the Night had many lesbians present. Citizens also pointed out that certain other supportive churches would have hosted the Task Force meeting. Themes of isolation and ignorance or new developments were echoed in this meeting: few people are aware of the Hate Crimes statute or the 1993 Human Rights law. Yet there has been a slow increase in awareness in the last few years. In the college, there have been some exciting developments: they have seen the offering of a Lesbian Literature class, as well as one on Gay History, which was an Honors course. Some of these classes were attended by those doing it on a dare, but in general there was good attendance. There have been thesis papers on G/L/B/T issues.
- Recently a local gay man has begun a weekly gay social group in his own home. After having investigated all the legal ramifications, he has split up the group by age levels: early evening is reserved for younger men, especially under 21; later evening is generally for older adults. This informal group is very well attended and is becoming more and more popular. He has been quite surprised at his inadvertent stardom and the group promises to enjoy continued success. As of yet he has received no negative feedback, and he has gotten a lot of responses from deeply closeted men, some of whom are married.
- One lesbian present is a teacher at a local middle school. She is out to a couple of colleagues and has received few problems, except from kids aged 11-15, who tease her. These students hear the rumors of her orientation from others, and in turn pass them on. Another teacher, who works at a Native American school, said her administration backs up any picked-on kids. At this school, boys who are perceived as effeminate are targeted...but since the administration does not condone such teasing, the bullies do it out of earshot. So there is not a uniform standard in the school systems for dealing with bullying based on perceived sexual orientation.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There need to be clear goals for schools with regard to G/L/B/T issues in general, as well as harassing such students. There need to be clearly defined norms.

TEACHING AND COUNSELING GAY AND LESBIAN STUDENTS

The NEA is concerned about all at-risk students, including gay and lesbian youth, who too often experience hostility and neglect in the school environment. These youth, who basically share the same concerns and have the same needs as other youth, are subjected to harassment by peers, sexual abuse, and domestic violence. They are often exposed to illness and destructive behavior, including HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; substance abuse; prostitution; suicide; and mental health problems. They are at greater risk than other students for isolation, parental rejection, running away, and low self-esteem.

Discrimination and stereotypes based on sexual orientation have been among the most difficult human rights issues to resolve. Despite gains in other areas, gays and lesbians still face discrimination, particularly in jobs and housing. Students and adults alike face name-calling, taunting, hatred, and occasionally violence. Few, particularly the young, have access to sympathetic support and guidance. If homophobia goes unchecked and uninterrupted in the classroom or in the community, the message is that scapegoating and targeting of any person or group is acceptable.

NEA Resolution C-26 Student Sexual Orientation

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 by trained personnel for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation.

In other actions the NEA has urged its affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs, including information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning,

sexual orientation, and other issues. The NEA believes that it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge, and wisdom about sexuality. It also believes that personnel policies and procedures must protect the rights of individuals on the basis of sexual orientation, and calls for elimination of barriers based on sexual orientation.

PERTINENT INFORMATION

Far too often, difficulties of gay teenagers stem from lack of tolerance that they meet in society, not from any inherent problem or condition of the young people themselves. All young people are entitled to protection, to honest information about all aspects of their lives, and to equal access to counseling, support, and educational opportunities. Some points to consider:

- Alfred Kinsey's studies on sexual behavior in the United States, published in 1947 and 1953, estimated that 13% of the male population and 7% of the female population were exclusively gay and lesbian. This was during a period when homosexual activity was almost totally taboo, and a 10% figure has been accepted as a working figure since.
- According to the *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide*, published by the Department of Health and Human Services in 1989, suicide is the leading cause of death among gay male, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual youth. They belong to two groups at high risk of suicide; sexual minorities and the young. Gay teenagers are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than are other teenagers.
- Children and siblings of lesbians and gay men may be in the position of having to choose between loyalty to family members they love and loyalty to their peer group.

- All students need to understand that not everyone is heterosexual. They need skills for maintaining friendships, declining or accepting romantic/sexual overtures with dignity, and confronting homophobia when they feel uncomfortable.
- While some gay and lesbian people may manifest "stereotypical" behaviors, the vast majority do not; the only way to know a person is gay or lesbian is if he or she says so.
- Both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association have rejected any connection between homosexuality and mental illness.
- Ethnic minorities face multiple discrimination upon revealing their sexual orientation, often resulting in the discarding of individual ethnic heritages.
- Most often, little exists within the school structure that addresses the unique needs of gay and lesbian youth, and few educators have specific training in working with these groups. A review of the current literature indicates that gay and lesbian youngsters are either treated as though they do not exist or as objects of hate and bigotry. The traditional support structures that serve other students do not serve gay and lesbian youth.
- Taboos surrounding the free and open discussion of homosexuality impede people in the school environment, and make it more difficult for youngsters to reveal their true feelings to other students or adults.

HOMOPHOBIA, DISCRIMINATION, AND VIOLENCE

Homophobia and discrimination exist, unfortunately, in virtually all schools and communities. Homophobia, the fear and dislike of homosexuals, generally operates to prevent peer-group interaction, guidance by understanding role models, and instruction by sensitive employees. These activities are important to the development of all students, but they are particularly critical for gay and lesbian students because they tend to reduce hostility toward these students and encourage their staying in school.

Prejudice leads to harassment, ostracism, and even violence against gay and lesbian students.

Discrimination against homosexuals in schools includes open ridicule by other students and staff and the treatment of homosexual students as mentally ill by teaching and guidance staffs. In its passive form, it includes lack of protection for students from harassment and violence and failure to diversify curriculum and libraries to include instruction and materials sensitive to the concerns of homosexuals. The NEA believes that the public schools can help reduce homophobia and discrimination against gay and lesbian students and improve their success rates in school through student services and staff development.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute documented a record number of incidents of homophobic violence and defamation in 1991, at the same time violence in other areas, including that against ethnic and religious minorities, had surged. Since April 1990, the Justice Department has maintained a national hate crime reporting number, 1-800-347-HATE, provided for under the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, the first federal law to include a "sexual orientation" provision. Although no enforcement action follows on the basis of sexual orientation, the Act requires the federal government to collect data and maintain statistics on crimes based on race, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Victims of hate crimes need to understand the importance of also filing specific complaints to appropriate local or state law enforcement or human rights agencies.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

The NEA supports effective educational and counseling efforts to encourage responsible behavior by all students. Appropriate educational and counseling strategies, policies, and procedures must be put into place to permit all of our young people to fulfill their own promise, regardless of sexual orientation or other condition.

Few teachers, counselors, psychologists, or administrators have had professional training in sexuality generally, much less sexual orientation. Many have inaccurate information and/or experience substantial personal discomfort about this topic and have never had a safe opportunity for dialogue. In-service training on sexual orientation must include a safe environment and the time for participants to respond on a personal level. Sensitizing educators is not sufficient; they need help in developing specific skills that can be applied in their own local settings.

NEA Human and Civil Rights offers a workshop on "Affording Equal Opportunity to Gay and Lesbian Students through Teaching and Counseling" annually to selected representatives of state education associations for their own professional development and replication of the training in their states. This training develops skills and awareness of approaches in meeting the needs of gay and lesbian students to counter the damaging effects of homophobia. In addition, the NEA urges local development of comprehensive programs, cooperation with others inside and outside the schools, and organized collaboration with specialists, agencies, and organizations to develop meaningful programs to which all in the community can subscribe.

SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS

An increasing number of school districts have developed policies and programs for education and counseling about sexuality, including homosexuality. Some of these programs, including Project 10 in Los Angeles, include education (awareness training for staff, expansion of the school library, development of a speakers' bureau); school safety (elimination of harassment, training of staff in responding to victims of sexual harassment, and development of systems for reporting harassment); dropout prevention (sponsoring of rap groups and peer group counseling, inclusion of the gay and lesbian perspective in suicide and substance abuse prevention programs, and sponsoring of positive social programs); and support services (referrals, hot lines, and accessibility to community resources).

Some possible approaches for consideration by public schools include established policy recognizing the right of all students to attend schools free of verbal and physical harassment; the right to attend schools where respect and dignity for all is standard; the right to have access to accurate information about themselves, free of negative judgment, and delivered by trained adults who not only inform them, but affirm them; the right to positive role models, both in person and the curriculum; the right to be included in all support programs that exist to help teenagers deal with the difficulties of adolescence; the right to attend schools where education, not survival, is the priority; and the right to a heritage free of crippling self-hate and unchallenged discrimination.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

Local and state education associations and their members can lead in ensuring that adequate guidelines, training, and programs are in place for prevention, intervention, and follow-up in dealing with the continuing problem of teen suicide. Associations can conduct their own training and workshop programs, distribute reports and recommendations, publicize program and informational needs, and negotiate explicit guidelines on member responsibilities in teen suicide prevention and response. Respect, protection, guidance, and a listening ear are essential for students, and NEA members can lead in making the difference.

- Provide training to enable selected staff to become resources to members on issues involving gay and lesbian students and educators.
- Participate in selective coalitions to improve student services for all students, including gays and lesbians.
- Encourage the establishment and maintenance of peer-support and community self-help programs for gay and lesbian students.
- Publicize school-based and cooperative school-community programs that address the educational and health needs of gay and lesbian students.
- Promote the inclusion of topics addressing the educational and health needs of gay and lesbian students in conferences.
- Recommend that school district in-service programs address gay and lesbian educational and health issues.
- Work with the PTA and other community-based support groups to provide information to parents regarding educational and health issues for gay and lesbian students.
- Work with the school district and community groups to develop a list of organizations and agencies that can assist or provide referrals for gay and lesbian students for help in emergencies.

- Work with the school district to make information available through the library or other departments to assist staff provide services needed by gay and lesbian students and to help staff relate to these students.
- Work with the school district to develop or expand school policy to ensure respect for persons of different sexual orientations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Educators committed to justice and human rights need to continue to examine their own responsibilities. There are children in almost every classroom who are or will be gay or lesbian. They need support and protection, as well as the opportunity to mature into sensitive, confident, productive adults regardless of their sexual orientation.

- Acknowledge the diversity of the student body, including the presence of gay as well as non-gay students.
- Address gay and lesbian student needs in programs on self-esteem, adolescent development, human relations, pluralism and diversity, conflict reduction, etc.
- Respect the confidentiality of students who confide the fact or suspicion of their homosexual orientation or who ask for assistance in this matter.
- Intervene to stop the harassment, including name-calling, of gay and lesbian students.
- Include in sex education courses information about risks related to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Work to ensure school policy that prevents the harassment of all students.

- Become involved as volunteers in community programs designed to assist gay and lesbian students.
- Work to promote the inclusion of in-service programs that help education employees deal effectively with gay and lesbian youth.

RESOURCES (AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS)

Knowing where to turn for information or support is important for educators and students alike. Organizations listed are among many which have adopted positions or can provide training assistance and guidelines for dealing with problems of gay and lesbian students.

American Psychological Association, Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns, 750 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4241; (202) 336-6052

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1250 N. Pitt Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1403; (703) 549-9110

Friends of Project 10, Inc., 7850 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90046; (213) 651-5200; (818) 441-3382

INSITE, 1619 Sulgrave Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21204; (410) 367-7506

National Education Association, Gay and Lesbian Caucus, P.O. Box 314, Roosevelt, New Jersey 08555; (609) 448-5215

National Network of Runaway and Youth Services, Suite 330, 1400 I Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 682-4114

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Box 27605, Washington, D.C. 20038; (202) 638-4200

Sex Information and Education Council of the United States, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 2500, New York, New York 10036; (212) 819-9770

Human and Civil Rights
(202) 822-7700



NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-3290

FACTFILE

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth

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POPULATION

Age of Awareness Many gay men and lesbians sensed something "different" about themselves as early as age four or five. The age at which most acknowledge their homosexuality is between 14 and 16 years for males and between 16 and 19 years for females.

Source: Saghir MT, Robins E, Walbian B, *Male and Female Homosexuality*, Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins, 1973.

Among Adolescents The Kinsey study found that from puberty to age twenty, 28% of boys and 17% of girls had one or more homosexual experiences.

Source: Kinsey AC, Pomeroy WB, Martin CE, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, 1948 and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, 1953, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders.

Among Adults During adulthood, 37% of Americans have homosexual experiences. Ten percent are predominantly homosexual. (This is the source of the commonly accepted 10% figure.)

Source: Kinsey, op cit.

STRESS FACTORS

Isolation Eighty percent of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth report severe isolation problems. They experience social isolation (having no one to talk to), emotional isolation (feeling distanced from family and peers because of their sexual identity), and cognitive isolation (lack of access to good information about sexual orientation and homosexuality).

Source: Hetrick ES, Martin AD, "Developmental Issues and Their Resolution for Gay and Lesbian Adolescents," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 14(1/2):25-43, 1987.

Family Difficulties Half of all lesbian and gay youth interviewed report that their parents rejected them due to their sexual orientation.

Source: Remafedi G, "Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent's Perspective," *Pediatrics*, 79: 326-330, 1987.

Substance Abuse In a study of gay male adolescents, 68% reported alcohol use (with 26% using alcohol once or more per week), and 44% reported drug use (with 8% considering themselves drug-dependent). Among young lesbians, 83% had used alcohol, 56% had used drugs, and 11% had used crack/cocaine in the three months preceding the study.

Source: Rosario M, Hunter J, Rotheram-Borus MJ, Unpublished data on lesbian adolescents, HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies, New York State Psychiatric Institute, 1992.

SUICIDE

Incidence Gay youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual young people. It is estimated that up to 30% of the completed youth suicides are committed by lesbian and gay youth annually.

Source: Gibson P, LCSW, "Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide," *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989.

Multiple Attempts In a study of 137 gay and bisexual males, 29% had attempted suicide, almost half of whom reported multiple attempts.

Source: Remafedi G, Farrow JA, Delsler RW, "Risk Factors for Attempted Suicide in Gay and Bisexual Youth," *Pediatrics*, 87(6), June 1991.

HIV/AIDS

Prevalence in Youth

Sixty percent of young adult cases of AIDS are among men who have had sex with men. Because HIV has an average incubation period of 10.5 years before the onset of AIDS, this statistic indicates that these young people were infected as teenagers.

Source: Centers for Disease Control, 1992.

A San Francisco study of gay and bisexual men revealed that 14% of the men between ages 17 and 22 were HIV positive—a figure four percent higher than young men in the 23 to 25 age group.

Source: AIDS Office, Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control, San Francisco City Clinic Special Programs for Youth and San Francisco Department of Welfare, "The Young Men's Survey: Principal Findings and Results." San Francisco, CA, June 1991.

Risk of Infection

The factors that place lesbian and gay youth at very high risk for HIV transmission include: having to exchange sex for money, unsafe sex, substance abuse, and denial of sexual identity.

Source: HIV Center for Clinical and Behavior Studies, New York State Psychiatric Institute, 1992.

VIOLENCE

Physical Assault

In a study of self-identified lesbian and gay youth in New York City, 41% reported suffering violence from their families, peers, or strangers. Of the violent incidents, 46% were directly gay-related and primarily perpetrated by family members.

Source: Hunter J, "Violence Against Lesbian and Gay Male Youths," *J. Interpersonal Violence*, 5(3) Sept. 1990, Sage Publications.

In the Schools

Forty-five percent of gay males and 20% of lesbian females experience verbal or physical assault in high school. Twenty-eight percent of these youth are forced to drop out of school because of harassment resulting from their sexual orientation.

Sources: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "Anti-Gay/Lesbian Victimization," New York, 1984; and Remafedi G, "Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent's Perspective," *Pediatrics*, 79: 326-330, 1987.

HOMELESSNESS

Expulsion from Families

Twenty-six percent of gay youth are forced to leave home because of conflicts with their families over their sexual identities.

Sources: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "Anti-Gay/Lesbian Victimization," New York, 1984; and Remafedi G, "Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent's Perspective," *Pediatrics*, 79: 326-330, 1987.

Survival Sex

Up to half of the gay/bisexual males forced out of their homes engage in prostitution to support themselves, greatly increasing their risk for HIV infection.

Source: Savin-Williams RC, "Theoretical Perspectives Accounting for Adolescent Homosexuality," *J. Adol. Health Care*, 9(2):95-104, March 1988.



ABOUT THE HETRICK-MARTIN INSTITUTE

Founded in 1979, the Hetrick-Martin Institute is an education, social service, and advocacy organization that offers services to lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, ages 13 to 21, in New York City and nationally.

HETRICK-MARTIN INSTITUTE
2 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6998
Telephone 212-674-2400
TTY 212-674-8695 • FAX 212-674-8650

FACTFILE

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FIGHTING THE MYTHS: Lesbians, Gay Men —and Youth

MYTH #1 Lesbian and gay adults recruit children to homosexuality.

FACT: Research shows that sexual orientation is determined either before birth or very early in life and that no one can alter another person's sexual orientation.

- In a study of 161 homosexual males with twin or adoptive brothers, 52% of the subjects' identical twin brothers, 22% of their fraternal twin brothers, and 11% of their adoptive brothers were homosexual, which supports the theory of a biological link. —Bailey JM and Pillard R, "A Genetic Study of Male Sexual Orientation," *Arch. Gen. Psych.*, **48**, December 1991, 1089-1096.
- A study of lesbian twin sisters found similar results: the identical twins of lesbians were three times as likely to be lesbian or bisexual than their fraternal twins. —Bailey JM et al., "Heritable Factors Influence Sexual Orientation in Women," *Arch. Gen. Psych.*, **50**, March 1993, 217-223.
- In a study comparing the brain tissue of 19 homosexual and 16 heterosexual men there was a significant size difference between the two groups in a cluster of cells in the hypothalamus (a region involved in sexual response). —LeVay S, *Science*, 253, August, 1991, 1034-1037.
- In a study of 979 homosexual and 477 heterosexual men, most said that their sexual orientation was established before adolescence, regardless of whether they had been sexually active at that time. —Bell AP, Weinberg MS, Hammersmith, SK, *Sexual Preference: Its Development in Men and Women*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981.

MYTH #2 Lesbian and gay adults are a danger to children.

FACT: Sexual abuse of children occurs primarily within the family. Most sexual abuse of children outside the family is committed by pedophiles (people who engage sexually with children). Adult lesbians and gays are no more likely to be pedophiles than heterosexuals.

- Pedophiles frequently do not differentiate between male and female victims; they are motivated more by power, control, and hostility than by sexual desire—and victimize girls twice as often as boys. —Freund K et al., "Erotic Gender Differentiation in Pedophilia," *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, **20**(6), 1991.
- A study of 930 women in San Francisco showed that of those who had been incestuously abused, 95% of the abuse had been perpetrated by a male relative—usually the father or uncle. —Russell D, *The Secret Trauma*, Basic Books, New York, 1986.
- A study of sexual-abuse offenders concluded that a heterosexual adult is more likely to be a threat to children than a homosexual adult. —Groth AN, *Men Who Rape*, Plenum Press, NY, 1979.

MYTH #3 Lesbians and gays are unfit teachers.

FACT: In most parts of the United States, lesbian and gay teachers are not able to reveal their sexual orientation, because doing so can jeopardize their jobs. Therefore, there have been few studies on lesbian and gay teachers. The aforementioned statistics, however, invalidate the myth that they could influence their students' sexual orientation or endanger them; and, there is no evidence that their effectiveness in the classroom differs from that of heterosexual teachers.

- In 1974 the National Education Association (the nation's largest organization of public school employees) added "sexual orientation" to its resolution on non-discriminatory personnel policies and practices that it urges its members' employers to follow.
- In a psychological test that predicts the success of teachers in the classroom, administered to 74 gay and lesbian and 66 heterosexual teachers, there were no differences in scores among the two groups.
—Martin M, "Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Teachers: Acceptance of Self, Acceptance of Others," Unpublished report, 1990.
- In a significant case, the Supreme Court of California ruled that the state could not revoke the teaching licence of a homosexual teacher unless it could demonstrate "unfitness to teach" with factual evidence rather than with a presumption of "immorality" (*Morrison v. State Board of Education*, 1969).
—Hunter ND, Michaelson SE, Stoddard, TB, *The Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.

MYTH #4 Lesbians and gays are causing the breakdown of the family.

FACT: Fewer than half of all American households are traditional nuclear families. Despite numerous legal and social obstacles, many lesbians and gays fight to retain ties with their families and for the right to raise their own children or to adopt them.

- Only 26% of U.S. households fit the traditional definition of family—a married couple with at least one child. This figure represents a 14% decrease from 1970. Half of all recent marriages are expected to end in divorce, and, since 1970, the number of families without an adult male parent has increased by 139%. —U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 1991.
- At least 6 million children in the United States are estimated to have lesbian or gay parents. The greatest difficulty facing these children is ridicule from other children, who have been taught intolerance or simply do not understand homosexuality.
—Schulenberg, *Gay Parenting*, Anchor Press, New York, 1985.
- A review of more than 30 studies comparing the children of lesbian or gay parents with those of heterosexual parents showed no significant differences in terms of gender identity or sexual orientation.—Patterson CJ, "Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents," *Child Development*, 63, 1025-42, 1992.
- A study of the daughters of lesbian mothers and heterosexual mothers showed no difference in leadership ability, interpersonal flexibility or self-confidence.
—Gottman JS, "Children of Gay and Lesbian Parents," *Marriage and Family Review*, 14(3-4), 177-96, 1989.
- In 1989 the New York State Court of Appeals held that "The term family...should not be rigidly restricted to those people who have formalized their relationship by obtaining, for instance, a marriage certificate or an adoption order....A more realistic, and certainly equally valid, view of family includes two adult lifetime partners whose relationship is long-term and characterized by an emotional and financial commitment and interdependence." —*Braschi v. Stahl Associates, Co.*, 74 N.Y.2d 201, 543N.E. 2d 49, 544 N.Y.S.2d 784 (1989).



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**MINNESOTA RESOURCES FOR
GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (GLBT) YOUTH
AND THE PROFESSIONALS WHO SERVE THEM**

SUPPORT GROUPS - TWIN CITIES

Central High School GLBT Student Support Group	612-293-8700
Contact: Kay Williams, School Nurse, 275 N. Lexington, St. Paul, 55104	
Como Park High School GLBT Support Group	612-221-4368
Contact: Gloria Ferguson, 740 W. Rose, St. Paul, 55117	
Cross Streets: Triangle Support Group	612-771-0076
Contact: Cullen Ryan, Cross Streets, 1167 Arcade St., St. Paul, 55106	
Edison High School Support Group for GLBT Students	612-627-2982
Contact: Mike Morris, Edison High School, 700 - 22nd Ave. NE, Minneapolis, 55418	
Harding High School GLBT Support Group	612-293-8900
Contact: Jackie Rogalski, Harding Sr. High School, 1540 E. 6th St., St. Paul, 55106	
Hennepin County Home School Gay and Bisexual Boys Support Group	612-627-7009
Contact: Leo Treadway, Minneapolis School District, Student Services Department 807 NE Broadway, Minneapolis, MN 55413-2398	
Location: 14300 County Highway 62, Minnetonka, 55345	
Minnesota Center for Arts Education GLBT Student Support Group	612-591-4700
Contact: Susan Stemme, 6125 Olson Memorial Hwy., Golden Valley, 55422	
Minnetonka High School GLBT Student Support Group	612-470-3519
Contact: Shari Perlman, 18301 Highway 7, Minnetonka, 55416	
Northwest Youth and Family Services - GLBT Youth Support Group	612-636-5448
Contact: Tisha Kehn, 1775 Old Hwy. 8, Suite 101, New Brighton, 55112	
Project Offstreets GLBT Support Group	612-338-3103
Contact: Sharon Byers, 212 2nd St. N., Minneapolis, 55401	
Roosevelt High School, Support Services for GLBT Youth	612-627-2667
Contact: Dave Prunty, 4029 28th Ave. S., Minneapolis, 55406	
Roseville Area Sr. High School GLBT Student Support Group	612-635-1682
Contact: Joan Brandt, Roseville Area Sr. H.S. 1261 Highway 36, Roseville, 55113	
South High School GLBT Student Support Group	612-627-2510
Contact: Sharon Bishop, 3131 - 19th Ave. S., Minneapolis, 55407	
So What If I AM? GLBT Youth Group	612-377-8800
Contact: Kirsten Gerber, The Bridge, 2200 Emerson Ave. S., Minneapolis, 55404	
St. Louis Park High School GLBT Student Support Group	612-377-8800
Contact: Kirsten Gerber/Cindy Reed, The Bridge, 2200 Emerson Ave. S., Minneapolis, 55404	

- Washburn Senior High, Support Group for GLBT Youth
Contact: Mark Wald, 201 W. 49th St., Minneapolis, 55409 612-627-2323
- West Suburban Teen Clinic GLBT Youth Support Group
Contact: Diane O'Connor, 478 - 2nd St., Excelsior, 55331 612-474-3251
- White Bear Lake Senior High School Teen Group for Kids with Sexual Identity Issues
Contact: Sue Dallman, White Bear Lake Area Schools, 3554 White Bear Av., White Bear Lake 55110 612-773-6042

SOCIAL - TWIN CITIES

- District 202: L/G/B/T/Q Youth Drop-In Center
2524 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, 55404
Hours: M & W, 3pm-11pm; Th & F, 3pm-1am; Sat., 12pm-1am
Note: Orientation required for youth to participate in programs and dances. 612-871-5559

SUPPORT SERVICES - TWIN CITIES

- Annex Teen Clinic (Sexuality-Related Health Care)
4915 42nd Ave. N., Robbinsdale, 55422 612-533-1316
- Cross Streets (Drop-In Counseling Center for Youth)
1167 Arcade St., St. Paul, 55106 612-771-0076
- Family and Children's Services - Downtown (Counseling)
Contact: Lesbian & Gay Program Intake Worker, 414 S. 8th St., Minneapolis, 55404 612-340-7444
- Family Service of Saint Paul (Counseling)
166 - 4th St., St. Paul, 55101-1464 612-222-0311
- HELPLINE - Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council
310 E. 38th St., Minneapolis 55406 (Mon.-Sat. 4pm-midnight) 612-822-8661
800-800-0907
- Minneapolis Public Schools
Support Services for GLBT Students, Faculty, and Staff
Contact: Leo Treadway, Minneapolis School District, Student Services Dept.
807 NE Broadway, Minneapolis, 55413-2398 612-627-7009
fax 612-627-2229
- Minnesota Task Force Gay and Lesbian Youth (Scholarship Fund)
Contact: Deb Wygal, c/o P-FFLAG, P.O. Box 8588, Minneapolis, 55408 612-729-4953
612-690-6171
- Project Offstreets Drop-In Center & Emergency Services, GLBT Support Group
Contact: Sharon Byers, 212 - 2nd St. N., Minneapolis 55401 612-338-3103
- St. Paul Public Schools
Out for Equity -- Support Services for G/L/B/T Students, Faculty, and Staff
Contact: Mary Tinucci, 1930 Como Ave., St. Paul, 55108 612-293-8757
- School's Out - GLBT Educators Group
Contact: Rick Arons, 3132 Girard Ave. S., #8, Minneapolis, 55408 612-825-2291

HIV/AIDS - TWIN CITIES

Tuesday Globe: A support group for youth who are HIV+ 612-627-6825
Contact: Kari Hillmer

Youth and AIDS Projects (Case management, HIV prevention, HIV testing) 612-627-6820
428 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis, 55403

Youth Intervention Project (Red Door Clinic service) 612-348-6363
Contact: Tim Denny, 525 Portland Ave. S., Lower Level, Minneapolis, 55415

MINNESOTA STATEWIDE

Minnesota Department of Education: RuthEllen Luehr 612-296-5833
AIDS/HIV/STD Prevention & Risk Reduction, 550 Cedar St., St. Paul, 55101

GREATER MINNESOTA - SUPPORT

Bemidji --Planned Parenthood 218-751-8683
Contact: Lynné Holt, 403 4th St. NW, Suite 240, Bemidji, 56601-0961

Duluth -- Together: A Group for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth 218-728-4269
Contact: Joel Huenemann, 315 West St. Marie St., Duluth 55803

Marshall -- Developing a group for G/L/B/T youth 507-537-0794
Contact: Deb Miller, 1103 Washington Ave., Marshall, 56258

Northfield -- information, referral, and support group 507-645-9301 or
Contact: Margaret Steiner, First Call for Help, Northfield Community Action Center 1-800-200-4636
Group for LGBT Youth, Contact: Megan 507-645-9728 (507 area code) Lara 507-663-1148
Dick 507-332-2941

Rochester -- Gay and Lesbian Youth Services 507-289-6329
P.O. Box 91, Rochester, 55903

St. Cloud -- Task Force for the Support of GLBT Youth 612-252-9504
Contact: Mary Johnson, TRI-CAP Family Planning Center
1411 West St. Germain St., St. Cloud, 56303

Winona -- Support Group for GLBT Youth 507-454-5147
Contact: Anthony Kelly, 1026 W. Howard, Winona, 55987

PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (P-FFLAG)

Twin Cities P.O.Box 8588, Minneapolis, 55408-0588		612-458-3240
Alexandria		218-943-1431
Bemidji		218-751-5326
	Evenings:	218-759-2331
Central Minnesota		612-252-5189
Duluth		218-727-6455
Fargo/Moorhead		218-232-8361
Grand Forks		701-775-4447
Mankato/St. Peter		507-625-7532
	24 hour Crisis	800-269-9940
Marshall		507-537-0794
Northfield		507-645-6453
Northwoods (Serving Iron Range)		800-232-1300
Red Wing		612-388-9610
Southern MN		507-282-0484

Compiled by the University of Minnesota, Youth and AIDS Projects

6/95

Checklist for Assessing Agency Homophobia

Yes	No	Unsure	
___	___	___	1. Our forms do not ask clients if they are "married, single, widowed or divorced".
___	___	___	2. Staff refers to "partners" rather than "husband, wife or spouse" when speaking with clients.
___	___	___	3. Our agency advertises in the GLBT media.
___	___	___	4. GLBT persons are listed in our brochure or statement of whom we serve.
___	___	___	5. Sexual orientation is included in our anti-discrimination policy.
___	___	___	6. We have GLBT materials in our waiting room.
___	___	___	7. Homophobic comments by clients are not tolerated.
___	___	___	8. If I were a GLBT client using this agency, I would choose to be open about my sexual orientation.
___	___	___	9. We advertise staff openings in the GLBT press.
___	___	___	10. Our personnel policy includes paid emergency leave for death or illness of significant others.
___	___	___	11. There are or have been GLBT persons on our staff.
___	___	___	12. GLBT staff are, or would be, welcome to bring their partners to staff social events.
___	___	___	13. Homophobic comments by staff are not tolerated.
___	___	___	14. If I were a GLBT person, I would be open about it here.
___	___	___	15. We have regular contacts and referrals within the GLBT community.
___	___	___	16. Our agency has inservices on GLBT issues.
___	___	___	17. GLBT issues and policy are covered in staff and/or volunteer training.

From: The Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, 310 East 38th Street, Room 204, Minneapolis, MN 55409 612-822-0127

Minority Groups: Resources

American Indians

MN American Indian AIDS Task Force
1433 E. Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 870-1723

Gay American Indians
1347 Divisadero St., #312, San Francisco, CA 94115

American Indian AIDS Institute
333 Valencia St. Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103

We Wah and Bar Chee Ampe: Native Two Spirits in NYC
American Indian Community House
404 Lafayette, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10003
(212) 598-0100

Lesbians in American Indian Culture, Paula Gunn Allen
Beacon Press

The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions, Paula Gunn Allen, Beacon Press

Gay American Indians: Creating an Identity from Past Traditions, Will Roscoe, St. Martin's Press

Living the Spirit, A Gay American Indian Anthology,
Will Roscoe, St. Martin's Press

The Zuni Man-Woman, Will Roscoe, St. Martin's Press

The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture, Walter Williams, Beacon Press

Honored by the Moon, (video), available at University
Film and Video, (612) 627-4270

Latino/Latina

Voce de Ambiente, P.O. Box 50285, Minneapolis, MN 55405

Gay and Lesbian Community Action Coalition
(612) 822-0127 or (800) 800-0350

Seniors

G.L.E.A.M. (Gay and Lesbian Elders Active in Minnesota)
P.O. Box 6515, Minneapolis, MN 55406-6515

Bisexual Persons: Resources

Books

Bi Any Other Names: Bisexual People Speak Out

Edited by Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu
Alyson Publication Inc.
Dept. H-74, 40 Plympton Street
Boston, MA 02118

Dual Attraction: Understanding Bisexuality

Martin Weinberg, Colin Williams, and Douglas Pryor
Oxford University Press
200 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Needs Assessment of the Bisexual Community in the Twin Cities

Commissioned by the Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council
310 East 38th Street, #204
Minneapolis, MN 55409

International Directory of Bisexual Groups

Compiled by Robyn Ochs
East Coast Bisexual Network
PO Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140
(617) 338-9595
updated every six months

Groups

Bi Women & Friends - a Twin Cities group of, for and by self-identified bisexual and bi-friendly women.

BTW
PO Box 7583
Minneapolis, MN 55407
(612) 827-0723

Bi Connection - a Twin Cities bisexual support, social and community action group for women and men.
Lou Hoffman, Art Freeheart, or Martin Quam
3534 Girard Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 588-1711
FAX: (612) 821-4349

Bi-Net USA - The National Bisexual Network of the United States

(Mid-West Regional Contact)
Lou Hoffman
3534 Girard Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55412
(612) 588-1711

Bisexual Men's Support and Discussion Group

Contact person: Gary Ligen
PO Box 13158
Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 735-4860