

Southern Miss ALLIES Program Manual

A Program of Student Counseling Services, Division of Student Affairs
Developed by Robert N. Rodgers, Ph.D.

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ALLIES Mission Statement

The ALLIES are a network of faculty, staff, and students willing to be visibly supportive and affirming of USM students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. ALLIES seek to foster a campus climate in which all students, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, may feel safe, supported, and respected. ALLIES believe that every student at USM has the right to pursue his or her education in peace and dignity, free from harassment, discrimination, and oppression.

Basic Guidelines for ALLIES

1. Respect the privacy of students who may seek you out for support, information, or resources: keep these contacts confidential.
2. Respect students' changing experience of self as they explore their sexual identity. Use language that reflects where the students are at in their developmental process. For example, students may not identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender even though they may be engaging in same gendered relationships, whereas others may experience some same gender attraction, yet ultimately identify as heterosexual.
3. Respect students' right to remain closeted: there can be tremendous negative consequences to coming out for many students, including the loss of friends, family, financial support, and basic safety.
4. Respect the boundaries of the students with whom you have contact: feel free to have coffee or lunch with students who seek you out for counsel, but maintain clear boundaries as a teacher, advisor, or advocate at all times. If you are a staff member of Rowan University, you are strongly encouraged to connect students with social supports other than those in which you may be currently involved.
5. Respect the needs of students that are beyond what you are trained to provide. Refer students for counseling when appropriate. If a student is experiencing a significant psychological distress and is having difficulty coping, suggest that counseling may be helpful. A good rule of thumb is that if you are feeling overwhelmed or worried about a student, it is probably a good idea to refer the student for counseling. The Counseling Center is located on the second floor of Kennard-Washington Hall.
6. Be aware of your own beliefs, values, and biases regarding gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, and actively consider how these influence the impact that you make on this campus.
7. Challenge yourself to discourage homophobic and anti-gay jokes and slurs, and to respond informatively to misinformation about homosexuality. These comments only serve to support a climate in which acts of hate and bias become more likely.
8. Feel free to consult with the ALLIES Program coordinator, Dr. Sidne Buelow, whenever you have questions or would like feedback or information on how to support or advise a student. You can reach her at the Counseling Center at 266-4829 or via e-mail at sidne.buelow@usm.edu.
9. Please affix the ALLIES Program symbol to your door. If someone tears it down or defaces it, contact the ALLIES Program coordinator for a replacement. If you leave the university, please remove the symbol from your door and return it to the ALLIES Program coordinator.

ALLIES Value Statement

As a member of the Southern Miss ALLIES Program, I agree that all members of the campus community should be treated equally and fairly regardless of sexual orientation. Furthermore, as an ALLY, I will work to foster a campus climate in which students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender may feel safe, supported, respected, and affirmed in their identities.

Signature

Date

Information for ALLIES

Glossary of terms

- Bisexual - person with emotional and sexual attraction to both men and women, not necessarily at the same time or to the same extent.
- Closeted - refers to hiding one's sexual orientation.
- Coming Out - process of recognizing and acknowledging non-heterosexual orientation to oneself and then disclosing it to others. Generally occurs in stages and is a non-linear process.
- Family of Choice - persons forming an individual's close social support network, often fulfilling the functions of blood relatives. Many gay persons are rejected when families learn of their sexual orientation, while others may remain closeted to biological relatives. In such cases, it is the families of choice who will be called on in times of illness or personal crisis.
- Family of Origin - biological family or the family in which one was raised. May or may not be part of a person's support system.
- Gay - common word for men with emotional and sexual attraction to other men, but often used for both genders.
- Gender Identity - one's psychological sense of oneself as a male or female
- Gender Roles - socially constructed and culturally specific behaviors and appearance expectations imposed on men and women.
- Heterosexism - institutionalized assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is inherently superior to and preferable to homosexuality or bisexuality.
- Heterosexual - person with a primary and enduring emotional and sexual attraction to persons of opposite gender.
- Homophobia - irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behavior.
- Homosexuals - person with primary and enduring emotional and sexual attraction to persons of the same gender.
- Internalized Homophobia - experience of shame, aversion, or self-hatred in reaction to one's own feelings of attraction for a person of the same sex.
- Inclusive Language - use of gender non-specific language to avoid imposing the limiting assumption of heterosexuality and to present an open social climate for non-heterosexuals.
- Lesbian - woman with a primary and enduring emotional and sexual attraction to other women
- Partner - primary domestic partner or spousal relationship among same gender couples.
- Sexual Orientation - an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction that a person feels toward another person.
- Transgender - broad term used to describe the continuum of individuals whose gender identity and expression, to varying degrees, does not correspond with their genetic sex.
- Transsexual - individual who presents him/herself and lives as the gender "opposite" to his/her genetic gender at birth. Transsexuals may be heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual in their erotic orientation.
- Transvestite - man or woman who enjoys wearing the clothes of and appearing as the other gender. While many transvestites are heterosexual, the use of transvestitism in the gay "drag" culture is well documented.

The Coming Out Process

Coming out refers to a life-long process of developing a positive gay identity. It can be a difficult journey, because gays must confront not only the widespread prejudice, discrimination, and homophobia of the persons and institutions of our society, but must also confront and overcome the negative stereotypes, misinformation, and homophobia they have often learned and internalized while growing up.

As gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons begin to accept themselves, hiding their feelings no longer feels like the best option. They stop denying who they are and begin telling others the truth. This process of self-acceptance and disclosure is referred to as coming out of the closet or coming out.

Coming out is a process that may be conceptualized as occurring in three basic stages: self-acceptance, telling others, and integrating one's identity. These stages are not linear, nor do they happen only once. The coming out journey is unique for each person, and there is no right or wrong way to come out.

1. Self-acceptance begins with an initial acknowledgment that one experiences emotional and sexual attraction to persons of the same gender, and may over time involve acknowledging a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity. Self-acceptance often involves accessing information from a variety of sources to begin constructing a positive gay identity. Initial efforts to meet other gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons are made. The inability to accept oneself, often due to internalized homophobia and shame, can be a significant barrier to being accepted by others.
2. Telling others tends to occur in steps, with persons often disclosing their identities initially to persons they feel will be most supportive. Beginning to share one's identity usually decreases feelings of isolation. Fear and expectation of rejection or exposure tends to cause many persons to avoid coming out to others, often even to those most likely to be accepting.
3. Integrating one's identity involves living in a genuine way, whether at work, in the community, or at home. It allows one to refocus the energy formerly used to hide and "pass" as heterosexual, and to live life to the fullest. Integrating one's identity includes talking about a romantic partner with family and friends and including them in holiday and other gatherings. At work, it may include talking to co-workers about one's personal life, or putting a picture of a partner on a desk, just like non-gay colleagues. It may also include getting involved politically.

To many Americans, gay and lesbian people are invisible. The truth is that gay and lesbian people are everywhere: as family members, co-workers, and neighbors. Gays touch the lives of millions of people who don't think they know anyone gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

- Coming out...
 - makes visible the reality of gay and lesbian lives.
 - dispels myths and misinformation and turns ignorance and fear into acceptance.
 - means no longer hiding the truth about one's life.
 - is about living with integrity and genuineness.
 - opens possibilities for honest relationships with family, friends and co-workers.
 - provides role models to others struggling with their sexual orientation.
 - empowers one to get involved and to work to make our nation a more civil and fair-minded place for everyone.

Adapted from: Rankow, L., "Women's Health Issues: Planning for Diversity"; Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Awareness Workshops at Wesleyan University; Thompson, C., "A Guide to Leading Introductory Workshops on Homophobia"; and "Just the facts about sexual orientation and youth."

Challenges to developing a positive gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender identity

Identity Confusion

- against a background of pervasive institutionalized homophobia and heterosexism
- within a context of invisibility
 - lack of positive role models
 - in society, in schools, in the mass media and advertising
 - within the heterosexual families of glbt youth
 - lack of institutionalized support and affirmation for same gender relationships
 - lack of positive history and shared culture for glbt youth

Rejection

- internalized homophobia
 - subtly influences life choices in negative and self-destructive ways
- familial and cultural rejection experienced by many glbt youth
- rejection by the churches of many glbt youth
- open devaluing, discrimination, and even violence toward gays has often been accepted in our society, including at high-schools and on college campuses

Misinformation

- distorted images, stereotypes, and inaccurate information perpetuated by the news media, churches, television and films
- shortage of responsible research
- lack of accurate information available in many schools and libraries

Self-acceptance

- no source for positive self-affirmation and validation during critical developmental years
- heterosexuality is pervasively framed as the only acceptable form of sexual expression
- stress of passing as straight and living a non-genuine life
- positive same-gender relationships, and gay and lesbian families are rarely seen in our society, because visibility can be dangerous

Denial of basic civil rights

- it continues to be legal in most states to fire someone just because he or she is gay.
- housing discrimination against lesbians, gays and bisexuals is legal in most states.
- Mississippi, Utah, and Florida legally prohibit gay and lesbian persons from adopting

Relationship development

- missing many of the wonderful, typical, social-developmental milestones and being able to share them with family and friends
- lack of normal experience of teen dating and social interaction has long-range significance
- lack of socially supported venues for gay and lesbian youth to interact
- dangers of trying to find romantic partners within normal social contexts due to gay bashing, forced outings, and harassment

Adapted from: Human Rights Campaign website at <http://www.hrcusa.org/>

How homophobia hurts everyone: A theoretical foundation.

Within the numerous forms of oppression, members of the target group (sometimes called minority) are OPPRESSED, while on some level, members of the dominant or agent group are HURT. Although the effects of oppression differ qualitatively for specific target and agent groups, in the end everyone loses.

1. Homophobia locks all people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self expression.
2. Homophobic conditioning compromises the integrity of heterosexual people by pressuring them to treat others badly, actions contrary to their basic humanity.
3. Homophobia inhibits one's ability to form close, intimate relationships with members of one's own sex.
4. Homophobia generally restricts communication with a significant portion of the population and, more specifically, limits family relationships.
5. Societal homophobia prevents some lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people from developing an authentic self identity, and adds to the pressure to marry, which in turn places undue stress and oftentimes trauma on themselves as well as their heterosexual spouses and their children.
6. Homophobia is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chances of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Young people, of all sexual identities, are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are normal.
7. Homophobia combined with sexphobia (fear and repulsion of sex) results in the elimination of any discussion of the lives and sexuality of LGBT people as part of school-based sex education, keeping vital information from all students. Such a lack of information can kill people in the age of AIDS.
8. Homophobia can be used to stigmatize, silence, and, on occasion, target people who are perceived or defined by others as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, but who are, in actuality, heterosexual.
9. Homophobia prevents heterosexuals from accepting the benefits and gifts offered by LGBTs, including theoretical insights, social and spiritual visions and options, contributions in the arts and culture, to religion, to family life, indeed, to all facets of society.
10. Homophobia (along with racism, sexism, classism, sexphobia, etc.) inhibits a unified and effective governmental and societal response to AIDS.
11. Homophobia diverts energy from more constructive endeavors.
12. Homophobia inhibits appreciation of other types of diversity, making it unsafe for everyone, because each person has unique traits not considered mainstream or dominant. Therefore, we are all diminished when any one of us is demeaned.

Adapted from: Blumenfeld, W.J. (Ed.) (1992). Homophobia: How we all pay the price. Boston: Beacon Press.

Beyond tolerance: Towards understanding, appreciation, and affirmation.

An eight-stage model representing a continuum of responses to homophobia and heterosexism.

1- Actively Participating

Actions that directly support gay or lesbian oppression. May include participating in jokes that denigrate gay persons, physically or verbally harassing persons who do not conform to traditional stereotypes of masculine or feminine behavior, or supporting anti-gay legislation.

2- Denying or Ignoring

Inaction that supports gay and lesbian oppression coupled with an unwillingness to consider or an inability to understand the effects of homophobia and heterosexism. Characterized by a laissez faire attitude. While not actively or directly homophobic or heterosexist, the passive acceptance of these actions by others serves to support gay and lesbian oppression.

3- Recognizing, But Not Taking Action

Recognition of homophobic or heterosexist actions by others and the harmful effects of these actions, without taking action to interrupt the homophobic or heterosexist situation. Taking action is prevented by homophobia or by a lack of knowledge about specific actions to take. Often accompanied by discomfort due to the lack of congruence between recognizing homophobia or heterosexism yet failing to act on this recognition.

4- Recognizing and Interrupting

Not only recognizing homophobic and heterosexist actions, but also taking action to stop them. Though the response goes no further than stopping the behavior, this stage is often an important transition from passively accepting homophobic or heterosexist actions to actively choosing anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist responses. May include intervening with others who are engaging in homophobic or heterosexist behavior, or actively choosing to participate in an activity that one previously avoided from concern that others might perceive them as gay or lesbian by their participation.

5- Educating Self

Acting to learn more about gays and lesbians, and heterosexism and homophobia. This stage is a prerequisite for the final three stages, all of which involve interactions with others about homophobia and heterosexism. In order to do this confidently and comfortably, people need first to learn more.

6- Supporting and Encouraging

Includes actions that support and encourage the efforts of others who are working to end homophobia and heterosexism.

7- Dialoguing

Involves an attempt to begin directly educating others about homophobia and heterosexism. Goes beyond interrupting homophobic and heterosexist interactions to actually engaging others in dialogue about these issues.

8- Initiating and Preventing

Includes actions that actively anticipate and identify homophobic institutional practices or individual actions and then working to change them.

Accepting What Cannot Be Changed - David G. Myers

An Essay Published in Perspectives, June/ July, 1999

I see myself as a family values guy. In my psychology textbooks, I document the corrosive effects of pornography, teen sexual activity, and family decline. I am on the advisory board of The National Marriage Project, whose recent cohabitation report concludes that trial marriages undermine marriage. I am participating in the new “communitarian” initiative to help renew society’s moral roots. And I have invested a couple thousand hours in writing a new book (The American Paradox, Yale University Press, 2000) that documents the post-1960 social recession and its roots in radical individualism, the sexual revolution, and the decline of marriage and the two-parent family.

Hearing me speak on such things recently, one friend remarked “you’ve become more conservative.” No, I said, I’ve always been pretty conservative on these family concerns, partly because the data are so persuasive. In the academic world, those of us who call attention to these data are, in fact, sometimes called “moral conservatives.”

Mindful of my “ever-reforming” Reformed tradition, new data have, however, dragged me to a revised view of sexual orientation. Here are some of the observations that challenged my former assumptions. I offer them as part of the “committed dialogue” process encouraged by Reformed Church General Secretary Wesley Granberg Michaelson.

- 1) There is no known parental or psychological influence on sexual orientation. Factors once believed crucial actually seem not to matter. Sexual orientation appears not to be influenced by social example, overprotective mothering, distant fathering, having gay parents, or child abuse. If some new parents were to seek my advice on how to influence the sexual orientation of their newborn, I could only say, after a half century of research, that we are clueless. So far as I currently know, there is nothing you can do.

- 2) Unlike sexual behavior and other moral tendencies, sexual orientation appears unaffected by an active faith. Compared with people who attend church only rarely, those who attend regularly are less likely to be juvenile delinquents, abuse drugs and alcohol, and divorce. In a recent National Opinion Research Center survey, they were also but one-third as likely to have cohabited before marriage and they reported having had many fewer sexual partners. Yet they are virtually as likely to be homosexual. This unpublicized finding is worth pondering: If sexual orientation is a spiritually-influenced lifestyle choice, then should it not—like those other disapproved tendencies—be less common among people of faith?

- 3) Today's greater tolerance seems not to have amplified homosexuality. Homosexuals are a small minority—roughly 2 or 3 percent of the population—and their numbers appear not to have grown with their coming out or with the passage of gay rights laws. Contrary to the concern that gay role models would entice more people into a homosexual orientation, surveys suggest no significant increase in the homosexual minority.

- 4) Biological factors are more and more looking important. This scientific story is still being written and the light is still dim, so we had all best be tentative. Nevertheless, we have learned,

first, that siblings of gay people, especially their identical twins, are somewhat more likely than people without close gay relatives to themselves be gay.

Genetic instructions, if there are such, must be manifest in physiology. So it should not surprise us that new evidence points to both prenatal hormonal differences and to brain differences in a region known to influence sexual behavior. One scientific review concludes that “the emerging neuroanatomical picture is that, in some brain areas, homosexual men are more likely to have female-typical neuroanatomy than are heterosexual men.” This may explain why homosexual men tend to have spatial abilities like those typical of heterosexual women. A newer report suggests that this female-typical pattern extends to a prenatally-influenced fingerprint difference between gay and straight men.

Homosexual women may likewise have more male-typical anatomy. For example, the hearing systems of lesbian women appear to develop in a way that is “intermediate to those of heterosexual females and heterosexual males.”

Although these findings suggest biological influences at work, we should be wary of an extreme biologism. As every psychology student knows, biologically disposed tendencies operate within an environmental context. Even Tulips require hospitable soil and water. It may yet be shown that certain biological dispositions interact with particular environments to predispose sexual orientation.

5) Efforts to change one's sexual orientation usually (some say, virtually always) fail. People who have experimented with homosexual behavior (as many heterosexual people do) can turn away from it. Homosexuals, like heterosexuals, can become celibate. Or they can marry against their desires and have children. But research on efforts to help people do a 180 degree U-turn with their sexual orientation—their feelings and fantasies—reveal, according to one review, “no evidence indicating that such treatments are effective.” Many a person has tried, hoping upon hope to escape their culture’s contempt. Few, it seems, have succeeded.

Christian ex-gay organizations have had a go at this, and may offer effective support to those seeking to leave the gay culture. But many—including thirteen such organizations affiliated with Exodus International—have been abandoned by their ex-ex-gay founders. Two of Exodus’ own co-founders, Michael Bussee and Gary Cooper, fell in love and left the organization. “I counseled . . . hundreds of people . . . who tried to change their sexual orientation and none of them changed,” recalls Bussee (quoted in Record, Spring, 1990). “The bottom line is it doesn’t work.” Reading the ex-gay literature, one is struck by the admitted homosexual temptations many “ex-gays” still struggle with. “God does not replace one form of lust with another,” explain Bob Davies and Lori Rentzel in *Coming Out of Homosexuality*. Ex-gays commonly struggle with homosexual attractions and typically “do not experience sexual arousal solely by looking at their wife’s body.”

Sexual feelings are private (and it is, after all, the direction of one’s lusts—one’s feelings and fantasies—that define sexual orientation). Thus, short of physiologically measuring sexual responses to male and female sexual stimuli before and after sexual conversion programs, there can be no precise measure of the frequency of actual sexual orientation conversion. Such research has not yet been done, so it remains an open issue as to whether significant numbers of

sexual conversions have occurred. (For men, whose “erotic plasticity” is relatively low, this may be an especially elusive goal.)

But this much seems certain. Many gay and lesbian Christians have felt called to heterosexuality, but after years of effort, prayer, laying on of hands, Christian counseling, and searing guilt have found only misery, and in some cases lost faith. This fact of life is recognized by my denomination, the Reformed Church in America, whose Theological Commission statements on homosexuality have discerned (in the words of the church’s 1998 study document) that, “despite the uncertainty over its cause, the sexual orientation of a person, in most cases, is highly resistant to change.”

That conclusion found support in the American Psychiatric Association’s December, 1998 criticism of efforts to change sexual orientation. Its president, Rodrigo Munoz, summed up the association’s position: “There is no scientific evidence that reparative or conversion therapy is effective in changing a person’s sexual orientation. There is, however, evidence that this type of therapy can be destructive.”

For all these reasons it becomes difficult to avoid the conclusion that sexual orientation appears not to be a choice. For most of us, the emerging scientific surmise rings true to our experience. Can those of us who are heterosexual recall a time when we chose to be so? Or is it just the way we are?

Faced with the accumulating evidence and the experiences of gay and lesbian Christians and their families, various people of faith have revisited the Scriptures and discovered that the Bible has little to say about homosexuality. Many of us have been surprised to learn how mute (or at least murky) the Bible is regarding a committed union between mature homosexual adults. Biblical scholars are debating the half dozen or so Scriptural passages referring to same-sex activity, passages that sometimes also involve pagan idolatry, temple prostitution, or child exploitation.

To be sure, Jesus affirmed marriage, and so should we. But he spoke no recorded words about homosexual behavior. Although he had much to say about the poor and powerless, homosexuality was not one of the social issues on his radar screen. If the question “what would Jesus say?” is on our screens, then the answer seems clear: care about children, care about the poor, care about humility, care about love, care about marriage, and be slow to judge.

There are issues that biblical scholars will continue to debate, and a case has certainly been made that, as the 1995 Report of the Reformed Church Theological Commission stated, “homosexual behavior is not God’s intended expression of sexuality.” The issues, however, have not to do with biblical authority. Rather they are issues of biblical interpretation, including how to understand specific texts “in light of the whole witness of Scripture.”

To suggest that sexual orientation may turn out to be disposed rather than chosen leaves us free to regard homosexuality as either a normal variation (as with left-handedness) or as a tragic abnormality to be contested (as with dyslexia). As the scientific picture becomes more complete, it will not resolve the values issue. Moreover, straight or gay, we all face moral choices over options that include abstinence, promiscuity, and long-term commitment.

Two decades after the first edition of his *Sex for Christians*, evangelical ethicist Lewis Smedes reflects that:

I still believe that the Creator intended the human family to flourish through heterosexual love. I still believe that homosexuality is a burden that homosexual people are called to bear, and bear as morally as possible, even though they never chose to bear it. I still believe that God prefers homosexual people to live in committed and faithful monogamous relationships with each other when they cannot change their condition and do not have the gift to be celibate.

Everywhere our culture seems preoccupied with the “homosexual threat to family values,” talk of which sometimes lays a foundation for harassment, cheap humor, and hate crimes. Reflecting on the murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man in Wyoming, church historian Martin Marty (*Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1998) likened today’s homosexuals to the lepers of Jesus’ day—people who were shunned by religious folk, but not by Jesus. “I believe that much anti-gay and anti-other activity is inspired by Christian rhetoric. But by now we must know that the attempt to love sinners while stirring hate about the sin, which, after all, has to be done by those called sinners, contributes to the atmosphere in which crime occurs.”

As one who is terribly concerned with the corrosion of family values, I am reminded of C. S. Lewis' tongue-in-check advice from senior devil Screwtape to his apprentice devil. Corrupt by diverting their attention:

“The game is to have them all running about with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood.” If an active faith commitment does not affect sexual orientation, and if, as it is beginning to look, sexual orientation is an enduring identity rather than a lifestyle choice, than why not spend our energies where they can make a difference—on the real problems of a culture in social decline?

Are those whose anti-homosexual rhetoric diverts us from a focus on the family and from children’s declining well-being unwittingly heeding Screwtape's advice? In answering the question, “what would Jesus do?” should we adjust our radar screens to refocus on the family? “If churches are going to expend energy worrying about sex—rather than poverty or hunger or homelessness or war—that energy ought to be expended on the distinctions that matter,” observes Catherine Wallace in *For Fidelity*. In this ‘if it feels good, do it’ era of marital decline, orientation is not the distinction that matters. Fidelity is.”

Can we, should we, relax and believe that, regardless of our sexual orientation, God loves us “just as I am”? Can we accept our own and others' sexual orientation without excusing promiscuity, exploitation, or self-destructive behavior? Can we regard bathhouses and brothels, gay bars and strip joints, as similarly degrading? Can we accept gays who, not given what Catholics call the gift of celibacy, elect the functional equivalent of marriage (which society denies them) over promiscuity? To merit our acceptance must they live alone? Can our family values include love, care, loyalty, and respect for a son or daughter who may be predisposed to homosexuality? And might we Christians benefit from praying Reinhold Niebuhr's serenity prayer?

God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Lacking such wisdom and feeling uncertain in our discerning of Scripture, what, for the present, shall we do? Might we come together in honest, open dialogue? In small groups, might we engage one another in love and receptivity to God's will?

A final thought: When torn between judgment and grace, let us err on the side of grace. When torn between self-certain conviction and uncertain humility, let us err on the side of humility. When torn between contempt and love, let us err on the side of love. In so doing we may be more faithful disciples of the one who embodied grace, humility, and love.

David Myers is a Professor of Psychology at Hope College.
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Exploring Personal Homophobia

Homophobia may be defined as an irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuals or perceived homosexual behavior. Homophobia may be experienced by heterosexuals as well as by gay and lesbian persons. Homophobia is manifested at the personal level, as well as being widely institutionalized within our society. The following is intended to help individuals explore their personal experience of homophobia.

1. Have you ever stopped yourself from doing or saying something, because of a concern that someone might think you are gay or lesbian?
2. How did you respond the last time that someone around you told a joke about “fags” or “dykes” or made a derogatory comment about gays or lesbians?
3. Have you ever intentionally done or said something so that someone will think you are not gay or lesbian?
4. Do you believe that gays or lesbians can influence heterosexuals to change their sexual orientation?
5. Do you believe someone could influence you to change your sexual orientation?
6. How would you feel about having a gay son or daughter? How would you feel about having your child’s same sex partner in your home? How would you feel about introducing your child and their partner at your church or at your place of employment?
7. How would you feel if one of your parents or parent figures, or one of your siblings came out to you as gay or lesbian?
8. Are there any jobs or professions, which you think gays and lesbians should be barred from holding? What is your rationale for this belief?
9. Have you ever been to a gay or lesbian bar, social club, party, church, or civil rights march? If not, what has kept you away?
10. How would you feel about wearing a tee-shirt that says, “How dare you presume I’m heterosexual”?

Suggestions for combating homophobia and heterosexism

Assume that wherever you go, gay and lesbian persons are present and wondering how safe the environment is for them. Don't assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual. Provide safety by making clear your support of gay and lesbian identity.

Realize that the cultural oppression of gay and lesbian persons is perpetuated in social situations where display of physical affection is exclusively heterosexual. In consideration of this, where it is appropriate and mutually consensual, feel free to be physically affectionate with someone of the same sex.

Challenge homophobia and heterosexism whether or not gay and lesbian persons are present. Don't always leave it to gays and lesbians to do it.

Remembering that silence is complicity; challenge and confront anti-gay and lesbian statements and structures as well as the assumptions behind them. Do not promote or condone the institutionalized invisibility of lesbians and gays.

When speaking of your romantic partner or spouse, point out that he or she is of the opposite sex, implying that he or she may not have to be.

Confront your own fears, negative memories, and bad feelings about gay and lesbian persons. Recall, work through, and release those feelings, thereby diminishing their hold on you.

Don't assume that a gay and lesbian person of the same gender is automatically attracted to you. Do you assume that all straight people of the opposite gender are attracted to you? If a gay or lesbian is attracted to you, try to be flattered, not offended. If it still bothers you, talk about it.

Change your use of language to be more inclusive. Instead of "do you have a girl/boy friend", you might say "are you seeing anyone." Heterosexism is promoted and maintained powerfully through language.

If people jump to the conclusion that you are gay or lesbian because of your friendships, or because you are reading a gay or lesbian publication, or because you are being affectionate with someone of the same gender, resist your impulse to deny it. Challenge yourself to experience gay/lesbian oppression rather than taking advantage of heterosexual privilege.

Respect the profound uniqueness and delicacy of the coming out process for each individual.

Challenge the widespread, destructive misinformation about gay and lesbian persons by educating yourself so that you can respond to misinformation and untruth with correct information and truthfulness.

Adapted from an essay distributed by the Progressive Students Alliance

Information for Students

Questions to Consider Before Coming Out to Parents

- Are you sure about your sexual orientation? Don't raise the issue unless you're able to respond with confidence to the question "Are you sure?" Confusion on your part will increase your parents' confusion and decrease their confidence in your judgment.
- Are you comfortable with your gay sexuality? If you're wrestling with guilt and periods of depression, you may be better off waiting to tell your parents. Coming out to them may require tremendous energy on your part, and it will require a reserve of positive self-image.
- Do you have support? In the event your parents' reaction devastates you, there should be someone or a group to whom you can confidently turn for emotional support and strength. Maintaining your sense of self-worth is critical.
- Are you knowledgeable about homosexuality? Your parents will probably respond based on a lifetime of misinformation from a homophobic society. If you've done some serious reading on the subject, you'll be able to assist them by sharing reliable information and research.
- What's the emotional climate at home? If you have the choice of when to tell, consider the timing. Choose a time when they're not dealing with such matters as the death of a close friend, pending surgery, or the loss of a job.
- Can you be patient? Your parents will require time to deal with this information if they haven't considered it prior to your sharing. The process may last from six months to several years.
- What's your motive for coming out now? Hopefully, it is because you love them and are uncomfortable with the distance you feel. Never come out in anger or during an argument, using your sexuality as a weapon.
- Do you have available resources? Homosexuality is a subject most non-gay people know little about. Have available at least one of the following: a book addressed to parents, a contact for the local or national Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, or the name of a non-gay counselor who can deal fairly with the issue.
- Are you financially dependent on your parents? If you suspect they are capable of withdrawing college finances or forcing you out of the house, you may choose to wait until they do not have this weapon to hold over you.
- What is your general relationship with your parents? If you've gotten along well and have always known their love -- and shared your love for them in return -- chances are they'll be able to deal with the issue in a positive way.
- What is their moral societal view? If they tend to see social issues in clear terms of good/bad or holy/sinful, you might anticipate that they will have serious problems dealing with your sexuality. If, however, they've evidenced a degree of flexibility when dealing with other changing societal matters, you may be able to anticipate a willingness to work this through with you.
- Is this your decision? Not everyone should come out to their parents. Don't be pressured into it if you're not sure you'll be better off by doing so -- no matter what their response.

Source: Sauerman, T. (1995). Coming out to your parents. Philadelphia: PFLAG Philadelphia

Resource List

Campus Resources

<u>ALLIES Program</u>

- The ALLIES are a network of informed faculty, staff, and students who are willing to be visibly supportive of Rowan students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. ALLIES seek to foster a campus climate in which all students, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, may feel safe, supported, and respected. ALLIES believe that every student at USM has the right to pursue his or her education in peace and dignity, free from harassment, discrimination, and oppression. For more information about the ALLIES Program or about becoming an ALLIES member, contact program coordinator, sidne.buelow@usm.edu, 266-4829.

University Counseling Center, Room 214, Kennard-Washington Hall, 266-4829

- Counselors, Psychologists, and Social Workers
- Affirmative counseling for GLBT individuals and same gender couples
- Resource books
- Outreach programming
- Website: <http://usm.edu/counseling/services/howtouse.html>

Cook Library, 266-4241

- Resource materials, including a collection of approximately 70 books donated to the library in 1992 by the Southern Miss GLB Student Organization
- Videos, including Breaking the Code, the Celluloid Closet, Beautiful Thing, Rebel Without a Cause, and “M”
- For students wishing to donate films to the library, there is up to a one year delay before their video is made available to the public

Gay/Straight Alliance, <http://www.usm.edu/gsa>

- Student organization focused on providing a supportive, safe social setting for persons with diverse sexual orientations including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or straight; provide related educational resources to the community; serve as a vehicle for political and social action regarding related issues; and to act as an ally to related organizations.

S.P.E.E.D., Students Promoting, Educating, and Empowering for Diversity

- Contact Adina Green, 266-6705
- Includes students of all sexual orientations and identities

Susan Hrostowski, 266-4178

- Local ordained Episcopal Priest who is affirming of GLBT persons

USM Clinic, 266-5390

- Information about human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, and related health issues

Women’s Studies Program, [links to resources](#)

- <http://www.usm.edu/wstudies/>

Community Resources

Camp Sister Spirit, P.O. Box 12, Ovett, MS 39464, 601-344-1411

- 120 acre tax exempt charitable organization that hosts a variety of cultural events and retreats

- Mission is to eradicate hatred and differences through education and interaction
Groove, 5232 Highway 42 Bypass, Hattiesburg, MS 39401 601-450-2377
- Gay bar

HIV/AIDS Resources (selected)

AIDS Services Coalition

- Director: Kathy Garner
- Outreach Coordinator: Judy Howell
 - 1-2-1 Haven House
121 College Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
601-450-4286
 - Transitional living up to 24 months for persons who are HIV-positive and homeless or at risk of being homeless and who do not need ongoing skilled nursing care
 - Co-ed
 - 10 beds
 - By application and interview.
 - HIV/AIDS Support Group meets twice a month at 6:30 p.m.
 - First Tuesday at 1-2-1 Haven House
121 College Street
601-450-4286
 - Fourth Tuesday in concert with Catholic Social Services at
The corner of S. 25th and O'Ferral
601-545-1616
 - Free educational programs on request

Hattiesburg Family Health Clinic/Southeast Mississippi Rural Health Initiative

- 601-545-8700
- 66 Old Airport Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39403
- Social workers on staff
- Titles III and IV family medical care, obstetrics/gynecology, dental, and pediatric services and grant-funded programs

Mississippi State AIDS Hotline

- 800-489-7670 (in MS)
- 601-576-7723 (outside MS)

Mississippi Department of Health – Division of HIV/STD

- 601-576-7723
- 800-826-2961 (AIDS Hotline)
- <http://www.health.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/14,0,194,134,html> (home)

Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources

- 601-544-4641
- 103 South 19th Avenue, Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Cont'd next page

- Ruthie Zinn, LMSW & other staff participants
- HIV/AIDS Awareness (presentations)

Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources continued

- Coordinates with Hattiesburg Family Health Clinic (below) and other patrons to provide various services
- HIV support group projected for the future

Web Based Resources

Bisexual

- www.binetusa.org/ BiNet USA. National network of bisexual organizations.
- <http://www.biresource.org/> Bisexual Resource Center. Extensive links and online resources and information.

Career and Job Search

- http://www.lgbtcampus.org/faq/career_resources.html Information and links for LGBTQ career related information from the website of the National organization of directors of LGBTQ centers on university campuses.

Communities of Color

- www.glas.org/lazeeza.html Arab Lesbians
- <http://glas.org/ahbab/> Gay & Lesbian Arab Society
- www.youthresource.com/ LGBT Youth of Color
- www.indiana.edu/~arenal/pflag.html Spanish PFLAG Material
- www.trikone.org/ TriKone - GLBT South Asians
- <http://www.csl.umd.edu/Handouts/populations/glbt.htm> National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization

Disabilities

- http://www.pridelinks.com/Health_and_Support/Disabilities/ Extensive list of LGBTQ/Disability related links.

Faith & Religion

- www.rainbowbaptists.org/ LGBT Baptists
- <http://www.wabaptists.org/> LGBT Baptists
- <http://www.gaybuddhist.org/index.html> LGBT Buddhists
- www.dignityusa.org/ LGBT Catholics
- <http://gltjews.org/> LGBT Jews
- www.lcna.org/ LGBT Lutherans
- <http://www.affirmation.org/> LGBT Mormons
- www.mlp.org/about.html LGBT Presbyterians
- www.umaffirm.org/ LGBT United Methodists
- www.ufmcc.com/ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches
- <http://www.soulforce.org/> "Soulforce is an interfaith movement committed to ending spiritual violence perpetuated by religious policies and teachings against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people."

- <http://www.balministries.net/index.cfm> Marsha Stevens - contemporary Christian music affirming of gays & lesbians

Family & Friends

- www.colage.org/ Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere
- <http://www.familieslikeours.org/> Families like Ours – LGBT Adoptions
- www.gayparentmag.com/ Gay Parent Magazine
- www.pflag.org/ Parents, Family, & Friends of Lesbians & Gays. A national advocacy organization, with local chapters, which provides extensive information and resources for LGBTQ persons, their families and friends.

Health Information

- <http://www.glma.org/> Gay/Lesbian Medical Association. Health information and resources for LGBTQ persons.
- <http://www.glbthealth.org/> LGBTQ health advocacy organization with extensive health related resources and links.

Political/Civil Rights Organizations

- <http://www.nclrights.org/> National Center for Lesbian Rights
- <http://thetaskforce.org/> National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. “...working for the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, with the vision and commitment to building a powerful political movement.”
- <http://www.hrc.org/> Human Rights Campaign. A national advocacy organization working for equal rights for LGBT persons.
- www.lambdalegal.org/ Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.
- www.aclu.org/ American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- www.glaad.org/org/ Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. “dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.”

Scholarships & Financial Aid

- <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/gay.phtml> Financial aid for LGBTQ college students.
- <http://www.washburn.edu/sobu/broach/glb-scholar.html> Scholarships for LGBTQ college students.
- <http://www.thepointfoundation.org/> Scholarships for LGBTQ college students.

Students and Educators

- <http://www.campuspride.org/> Campus Pride Net. A national online community and resource network of student leaders and campus organizations that work to create safer university environments.
- www.lambda10.org/ GLB Greek issues at universities.

- <http://www.lgbtcampus.org/> National organization of directors of LGBTQ Centers on university campuses. Provides extensive resources, information, and guidance for campus organizing efforts.
- <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/index.html> Group supporting LGBTQ international students and educators.
- www.glsen.org/ Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network. Organization dedicated to creating safe schools for LGBT persons.
- www.outproud.org/ National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Youth

Substance Abuse

- <http://www.nalgap.org/> National Association of Lesbian & Gay Addictions Professionals.

Transgender

- <http://www.ftmi.org/> FTM and Transsexual Male Resources.
- <http://www.donnarose.com/> Website of a MTF person with extensive list of links to related resources in addition to her personal story.
- <http://pflag.org/TNET.tnet.0.html> PFLAG's Transgender Network. Extensive resources for transgender persons, friends, and family.

Miscellaneous Resources

- <http://www.davidmyers.org/> Personal reflections on sexual orientation. Professor of Psychology, Hope College.
- www.scoutingforall.org/ Scouting for ALL. Promoting diversity and inclusivity in scouting.
- <http://www.glbtc.com/> Online encyclopedia of LGBTQ culture.
- www.iglss.org/ Institute for Gay & Lesbian Strategic Studies. "An independent think tank answering questions that affect the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities, IGLSS confronts tough issues -- using credible methodology to assure reliable answers."

Brief list of related readings*Especially For Parents*

Griffin, C.W., Wirth, M.J., Wirth, A.G., & McNaught, B. (1997). Beyond acceptance: Parents of lesbians and gays talk about their experiences. NP: St. Martin's Press.

Borhek, M.V. (1993). Coming out to parents: A two-way survival guide for lesbians and gay men and their parents. NP: Pilgrim Press.

Murray, R., & Pool, G. (1998). A Journey to Moriah. NP: Banta & Pool.

Gay and Lesbian lives

Bass, E., & Kauffman, K. (1996). Free your mind: The book for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth -- and their allies. New York: HarperCollins.

Berzon, B. (Ed.) (1992). Positively gay: New approaches to gay and lesbian life. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts.

Faderman, L. (1991). Odd girls and twilight lovers: A history of lesbian life in twentieth-century America. New York: Penguin.

Preston, J. (1992). A member of the family: Gay men write about their families. New York: Dutton.

Preston, J., & Lowenthal, M. (Eds.) (1995). Friends and lovers: Gay men write about the families they create. New York: Plume/Penguin.

Berzon, B. (2004). Permanent partners: Building gay and lesbian relationships that last. New York: Plume.

Religion and Spirituality

Bouldrey, B. (Ed.) (1995). Wrestling with the angel: Faith and religion in the lives of gay men. New York: Riverhead Books.

McNeill, J.J. (1993). The church and the homosexual (4th edition). Boston: Beacon Press.

McNeill, J.J. (1996). Taking a chance on God: Liberating theology for gays, lesbians, and their lovers, families, and friends. Boston: Beacon Press.

Myers, D.G., & Scanzoni, L.D. (2005). What God has joined together: The Christian case for gay marriage. HarperSanFrancisco.

Scanzoni, L.D., & Mollenkott, V.R. (1994). Is the homosexual my neighbor?: A positive Christian response. New York: HarperCollins

Spong, J.S. (1988). Living in sin: A bishop rethinks human sexuality. New York: HarperCollins.

White, M. (1995). Stranger at the gate: To be gay and Christian in America. New York: Plume.

Critical Analysis of Related Social Issues

Pharr, S. (1988). Homophobia: A weapon of sexism. Inverness, CA: Chardon.

Brief sampling of related films, some of which are available for rental at local video stores
--

- Adventures of Felix (2000, France)
- Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (1994, Australia)
- All over the Guy (2001)
- American Beauty (2000)
- Beautiful Thing (1996, UK)
- Before Night Falls (2000)
- Big Eden (2000)
- Boys Don't Cry (1999)
- Brokeback Mountain (2005)
- But I'm a Cheerleader (2002)
- The Birdcage (1996)
- Celluloid Closet (1996)
- The Crying Game (1992)
- Desert Hearts (1985)
- Flawless
- Get Real (1999, UK)
- Gods and Monsters
- Home for the Holidays
- In and Out
- Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love (1995)
- Kissing Jessica Stein (2003)
- Laramie Project (2002)
- Longtime Companion (1990)
- La Cage Aux Folles (1978, France)
- Love, Valour, and Compassion (1997)
- Maurice (1987)
- Object of My Affection
- Philadelphia (1993)
- Priest (1995 UK)
- Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story
- Strawberry and Chocolate (1993, Cuba)
- Sum of Us (1994, Australia)
- Threesome (1994)
- Torch Song Trilogy (1988)
- To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar
- Tongues Untied (1991)
- Transamerica (2005)
- Trembling Before G-d (2001)
- Trick (1999)
- Wedding Banquet (1993)

**ALLIES Program
Anonymous Incident Report Form**

Form for anonymous reporting of bias incidents, discrimination, threats, attacks, and harassment events related to sexual orientation at Southern Miss.

In addition to filing this report, students may wish to:

- For incidents against students by Southern Miss faculty or staff, contact Rebecca N. Woodrick, Director, Southern Miss Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employment at 601.266.6619 or via e-mail at rebecca.woodrick@usm.edu.
- For incidents against students by other students, contact Dr. Eddie A. Holloway, Dean of Students, who reported (personal communication, 9/6/00) that routine procedure is to have the aggrieved party file the complaint with his office, following which Dr. Holloway completes an incident report and then calls in the offending student and the aggrieved student and attempts to mediate a resolution.

Filing this report:

- Please forward this report to Dr. Sidne Buelow, Coordinator of the Southern Miss ALLIES Program, Box 5075.
- Students or concerned others may also contact Dr. Buelow or other UCC staff for support and additional resources by phone (601.266.4834), via e-mail (sidne.buelow@usm.edu) or in person at the Southern Miss Counseling Center.

If you wish to be contacted, please provide your name and contact information:

Name

Contact Information

Why it is important to report these incidents:

- When bias incidents, threats, attacks, and harassment events go unreported:
 - They remain officially invisible.
 - The extent of the problem goes unrecognized.
 - Other students who may be experiencing similar problems think they are alone.
 - It becomes harder to protect against these events.
 - Students increase their risk and the risk of others for future victimization.
 - Available help is not accessed by the student.
 - It helps perpetuate the myth that incidents against gays are normal and acceptable.
 - Careful documentation and accurate statistics are important tools in fighting oppression and bigotry.

Date of report

Date of incident

Report made by:

Person who was targeted Concerned other

Reported to campus police? Yes No Other agency (Specify): _____

Information about perpetrator/s if available:

Student(s)? _____

How many? _____

Relationship to target person (victim)? _____

Information about the target person (victim):

Age _____	Status <input type="checkbox"/> Freshman <input type="checkbox"/> Sophomore <input type="checkbox"/> Junior <input type="checkbox"/> Senior <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty	Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Res Hall <input type="checkbox"/> Greek <input type="checkbox"/> Off Campus <input type="checkbox"/> Home	Ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian American <input type="checkbox"/> Latino/Hispanic American <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-ethnic American <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> White, Non-Hispanic American <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> International, from what country? _____	Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian Woman <input type="checkbox"/> Gay Man <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/> Questioning
Gender Identity <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender				

1. The incident involved:

- Verbal harassment
- A physical attack
- Job-related discrimination
- Academic discrimination
- Job loss
- Property defacement
- Property damage
- Exposure to derogatory language related to sexual orientation
- Exposure to derogatory material (e.g., pictures) related to sexual orientation
- Other (Explain)

2. The following injuries/concerns resulted from the incident (please attach any supporting documentation):

- Acute Physical (e.g., broken arm)
- Chronic Physical (e.g., recurrent migraines)
- Acute Emotional (e.g., panic attacks)
- Chronic Emotional (e.g., depressed mood for over six months)
- Financial (e.g., loss of salary)
- Academic (e.g., grade reduction in a class)

3. The following medical or psychological treatment was sought:

- Emergency room care
- Primary physician care
- Psychological services (e.g., outpatient counseling, assessment)
- Psychiatric services (e.g., psychiatric evaluation, support, and recommendations)
- Inpatient hospitalization

Filing report: See page one.