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Beziehungen

For Diversity
Against Discrimination

Ministerium
für Gesundheit, Soziales,
Frauen und Familie des
Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen

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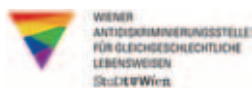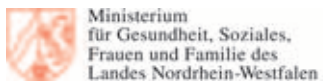
Different in More Ways Than One.

Providing Guidance for Teenagers on Their Way
to Identity, Sexuality and Respect

Aspetti psicologici e relativi alla salute

Verschiedene Lebensformen

Theory
Glossary
Literature
Adresses

Histoire et culture

Sexualités

La comunità lesbica e gay

Religie

Table of contents

Introduction

Who is this book for?

This manual was developed to be used as a tool to combat discrimination especially among young people. It presents advice as well as a variety of methods for training and consciousness-raising sessions. It aims at addressing discrimination based on sexual orientation inside a multicultural society. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and on race or culture share a similar basis – the fear of the "other"- i.e. everything that seems "strange" or "abnormal". The manual pays special attention to situations involving double discrimination where individuals face discrimination on the grounds of their race or ethnic origin as well as of their sexual preference. Teenagers and young adults are the end-beneficiaries of the manual. It is therefore important to inform educators, teachers and psycho-social counsellors who deal with young people at crucial points (in schools, in the health system, etc.) so that they react to xenophobic and homophobic impulses and address these in a professional way.

In order to develop a user-friendly product, the TRIANGLE partner organisations conducted a needs analysis. In 2002, 377 teachers, youth workers and counsellors in Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands were asked what they needed to fight against discrimination in schools, social work and in counselling. The main problem for teachers was that young people are not always willing to talk openly about homosexuality or that they showed offensive or aggressive behaviour towards homosexual persons in the group. Teachers and youth workers need more information on didactical issues and practical methodology. 65% of the questionnaire's respondents wanted to know how to teach about homosexuality in a classroom or in other groups of teenagers. 53% needed advice on how to deal with homophobic attitudes in a classroom while 46% replied they did not know how to empower gay and lesbian pupils or clients. In the psycho-social health sector the main problem encountered when counselling gays and lesbians seems to be the professionals' lack of confidence in their own knowledge about homosexuality in cultural or ethnic minority groups (91%). Counsellors also reported that they find it difficult to adequately recognize problems related to homosexual preference. These respondents replied that they need information about the coming-out process (61%). The counsellors stated that what they most urgently needed to know was how they could adequately address homosexuality in a counselling situation.

The partner organisations involved in TRIANGLE hope that this manual will contribute towards a reduction of discrimination by helping educators, teachers and psycho-social counsellors address these priority areas in a professional manner. The manual, which condenses the knowledge and experience of many experts, is a tool which will help the target group to perceive more clearly the crucial points involved in the fear of the "other" and will help them prevent or react to discrimination. A fundamental part of this process is, of course, that the young people as well as the adults involved in this process should be willing to reflect on their own attitudes. The advice and methods included in this manual will give them ample opportunity to do so.

What is the background of this manual?

In November 2000, the European Council adopted a decision establishing a Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination. The programme, designed to promote measures to prevent and combat discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, has three main objectives:

- to further the understanding of issues related to discrimination;
- to develop the capacity to prevent and address discrimination effectively and;
- to promote and disseminate the values and practices underlying the fight against discrimination.

The Action Programme aimed at supporting the organisations that take part in the prevention of and fight against discrimination by enabling them to compare and contrast their approaches with the experience gained in other regions of the Community. On this basis, the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs, Women and Family of the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, together with the Anti-discrimination Unit of the City of Vienna, submitted a proposal for a trans-national exchange action called TRIANGLE: Transfer of Information to Combat Discrimination Against Gays and Lesbians in Europe. The co-operating partners involved in the action came from five countries: Austria, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Participating organisations include:

Ministerium für Gesundheit, Soziales, Frauen und Familie des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen
Fürstenwall 25, D – 40219 Düsseldorf, Germany
www.mgsff.nrw.de

Arcigay Nazionale
via Don Minzoni 18, I – 40121 Bologna, Italy
www.arcigay.it

Empowerment Lifestyle Services
Vinkenstraat 116 A, NL – 1013 JV Amsterdam,
The Netherlands
www.empower-ls.com

ProChoix
177, avenue Ledru-Rollin, F – 75011 Paris, France
www.prochoix.org

Rutgers Nisso Groep
Postbus 9022 oder Oudenoord 176-178, NL-3506 GA Utrecht,
The Netherlands
www.rng.nl

SchLAu NRW – Schwul Lesbische Aufklärung in NRW
c/o Jugendnetzwerk Lambda NRW e. V., Wilhelmstraße 67,
D – 52070 Aachen, Germany
www.schlau-nrw.de

Schorer Stichting
Postbus 15830, NL – 1001 NH Amsterdam, The Netherlands
www.schorer.nl

Wiener Antidiskriminierungsstelle für Gleichgeschlechtliche Lebensweisen
Friedrich Schmidt Platz 3, A – 1082 Wien, Austria
www.queer.wien.at

These organisations chose to co-operate on the TRIANGLE project for several reasons. Even now, lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Europe face discrimination on a regular basis. Many Europeans still consider it "natural" and their "right" to despise, harass, or ignore homosexuals. European societies still take it for granted that "everyone" is heterosexual, thus denying the existence of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. Many laws and other regulations still deny equal rights to heterosexuals and homosexuals. Negative attitudes and behaviour still stigmatise gays, lesbians and bisexuals in most of Europe. These forms of discrimination deeply affect these individuals' daily lives. They usually do not even dare to hold hands in public like heterosexuals do. In every social situation, they have to make decisions whether to admit, declare or deny that they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. Any decision to be open about this implies risks: of being shunned, of losing one's job, of being harassed or intimidated and even of being physically abused.

The TRIANGLE partners felt that on the one hand, the situation of lesbians and gays is improving because of an increasing awareness in many countries and European-level measures to combat discrimination. On the other hand, however, certain aspects of the situation are getting worse. New fears of international terrorism and fundamentalism add to already existent feelings of xenophobia and of rejection of Muslims. Increasing immigration into Europe has led to societies that are more and more intercultural; and the integration of new populations and new ideas often isn't easy. There are tensions between European-born citizens and newcomers. The generally tolerant attitudes of Europeans towards homosexuals, still quite recent, are not always shared by newcomers. Most importantly, the growing number of people who have a fundamentalist worldview often find it very difficult to accept people who live their homosexuality openly. Conservative Islamic as well as Christian (religious and cultural) leaders regularly declare that homosexuality is a threat to society and some young people who identify to this fundamentalism often take this as a license to disrespect homosexuals or even to resort to violent behaviour. Some of the people coming from such backgrounds who themselves experience homosexual feelings and increasingly fall between two cultures, feel very comfortable in this situation and live this experience as personally enriching. Others do not feel at home among the gay, lesbian and bisexual community, nor do they feel safe among their cultural peers. Thus, European intercultural societies have to deal with some difficult problems concerning homosexuality, lifestyles, religion, and culture. These problems are most visible in the settings of education and psychosocial care. In response to this, the TRIANGLE partners decided to collect methods of good practice that would support workers in this field. They also wanted to provide the professionals in the field with effective and practical tools.

Who wrote the manual?

The authors of this manual come from different institutions and countries. They are experts in the field of combating discrimination, sexual education, counselling, intercultural education and research on sexualities.

Dr. Pascal Belling studied Literary Criticism and Comparative Studies. He works as a senior programme officer in the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs, Women and Family of North-Rhine Westphalia and is responsible for anti-discrimination and diversity policies.

Flora Bolter is a researcher in social science and is a member of the editorial board of ProChoix, a anti-racist and anti-sexist French review.

Peter Dankmeijer is coordinator of Empowerment Lifestyle Services, a company which advises on diversity issues in schools. He develops curricula, informative materials for educators and advises schools on emancipatory policies.

Martin Enders is a certified educationalist and has been working in the field of counselling since 1999 in the KCM gay centre in Münster. Since 2002 he has been one of the speakers of SchLAu NRW and has directed the gay and lesbian education project "andersrum aufgeklärt" in Münster.

Margherita Graglia Graglia is a psychologist. She is responsible for gay and lesbian psychological counselling in Reggio Emilia (Italy). She works both as a trainer and as a consultant in various projects about diversity and education.

Karen Kraan is an educational scientist who specialises in learning and behavioural problems. She works at Schorerstichting (Amsterdam) as program coordinator, trainer, materials developer and consultant in the fields of HIV/STI, sexual identity and sexual diversity.

Adriana Stern Stern is the author of books for children and teenagers. She wrote the stories in this manual. The main topics of her writing are: Jewish life in Germany, violation of children's rights, anti-Semitism, racism, homosexuality. She has been publishing regularly since 1993 (Pias Labyrinth).

Dr. Stefan Timmermanns is a researcher and expert in sex education. He is a board member of the German Association of Sex Education (GSP) and the co-ordinator of the TRIANGLE project.

Mag. Wolfgang Wilhelm an anti-discrimination officer of the City of Vienna, has worked in the field of prevention, counselling and research in the areas of AIDS and disabilities. He has also done pedagogical work with young people via theatre. He is a self-employed mediator, trainer, supervisor and coach.

The scientific research and evaluation of the project was implemented by Rutgers Nisso Groep:

Dr. Floor Bakker is the head of the research department of Rutgers Nisso Groep. She has extensive expertise in the (management of) research in the broad area of sexual and reproductive health.

Dr. Ine Vanwesenbeeck is a senior researcher at Rutgers Nisso Groep. Her expertise is on homosexuality, sex education, and STD/HIV prevention.

5

Thank you!

How to use the manual

The manual consists of different theme guides and one brochure. This brochure contains the introduction, the theory part and the annex including a bibliography, addresses and a glossary. In the guides you can find more detailed information about certain topics related to the subject of homosexuality. The various chapters are subdivided into sections that are specifically addressed to teachers/educators and to counsellors, with cross-references being made from some educational sections to the counselling sections and vice-versa. This approach reflects the fact that there is a difference between education and counselling, while also enabling the actual overlap between various counselling situations so as to adequately take them into account in the sex education context. This also corresponds to the present discussion among educators and counsellors about their chief fields for action, such as school education and youth welfare. In the actual work with young people in various educational settings these two aspects overlap. The different professions have different competences, for instance, a counsellor will no doubt be more competent to provide individual assistance over the longer term whereas educators/teachers seem to be better equipped to place the issue or problem in question in the context of the group norms and processes and to tackle it by active discussion/ educational work.

The theme guides

Each chapter in the manual is presented as a kind of guide. This method aims at helping the reader to become better oriented on an unknown (or not well known) subject. The chapters of the manual are presented in a certain order. It is however up to you, the reader, to decide for yourself where you would like to start. Users who read the manual systematically from beginning to end will note that some information is repeated in several chapters.

Story telling

Stories play an important role in our lives. From early childhood on, we all enjoy stories or fairy tales. In plays, in movies, in the newspaper gossip columns… almost everywhere, stories are told about different people's lives, their fortunes and misfortunes. Perhaps we all like stories so much because they touch us in a very personal and intimate way. Children suddenly become silent and interested when the teacher starts telling a story. Intuitively, it seems, they hope to learn the answers to their essential questions: where do I come from, where will I go and what am I supposed to do? Listening to stories stimulates our imagination. Sometimes we suffer with the protagonists as if we experienced their feelings personally.

The manual wishes to use the associative and personal effect of the stories to help readers become more intimately involved with different subjects. Discrimination is not only a word but rather an everyday experience for many people. Often we can't imagine what people are going through, what they feel or what they dream of. This changes, however, if we follow other people and see the world through their eyes. We feel with them and we can more easily understand their problems. One result of using stories and relating personally to them may be that we become more engaged in supporting those who are discriminated against and also in supporting their request for respect and equality. This is the intention of the stories used in this manual.

If you are a teacher, educator or counsellor, you can use some of the stories as a starting point for a discussion on the different forms of discrimination and their effects on people. It is the easiest way to talk directly or indirectly) about someone's hidden fears which might be the reason why that person discriminates against others. Working against discrimination doesn't only consist in feeling sympathy for the underdog. It also means coping with one's own fears of being different from norms within our society, with the fear of being excluded or harmed. This is no easy task. Sometimes, we must learn to accept or even respect other people's differences!

Framework

In the "Framework" section, the reader acquires basic information related to the main theme of the chapter. Afterwards, an introduction to the subject is given in the paragraph titled "First of all". This section is followed by "Basic information", which aims at providing a short analysis of problems t hat can arise when dealing with a certain topic in education or counselling contexts. The final section, "What does this mean for me?", is intended to broaden the reader's scope by presenting various approaches on how the different problems connected with this topic may be solved. Here the manual lists a variety of strategies that can be used in the professional and perhaps also in the reader's private life.

Bear in mind

Educating and/ or counselling on a specific subject depend strongly on an individual's personal views, experiences and values regarding that subject. As such, it is useful for you as a professional to first take a look at your own opinions and values before addressing the target group. Beside the professional way of addressing the subject your personal opinions do have an important influence on the final recom-mendations you make to clients and how you will present these as possible solutions or advice. Being aware of your personal attitude towards relationships, religion, sexuality, lifestyles, culture, etc., and of how your points of view have evolved, is vital to respect the attitudes and experiences of your pupils or clients. The questions proposed in this part of the chapter should help you explore your own views. However, you have to be careful not to project your own experiences on others. Dealing with the experiences or problems of others may awaken memories of your own feelings in a similar situation. Such memories can influence teaching or counselling in a hidden but important way.

Tools …
… in education

Exercises are very important for practical educational work. This manual has integrated some exercises as a source of inspiration for a professional's everyday work. Each of the exercises is presented according to a fixed structure. First, the "Aim" of the method is expressed in brief, simple terms. Then the "Method" is described – here one can read how the exercise can be carried out. Finally, a commentary, "Please note" is provided. This section aims at calling the reader's attention to crucial aspects of a particular tool or to complicated elements they should be aware of while using the exercise.

Before undertaking to use the tools in this manual, we would like to call your attention to the following remarks:

- Don't spend only one lesson on a highly personal subject like sexual orientation, but rather try to spread the discussion over several sessions. Young people need time to digest new information and they should be given the opportunity to ask questions during the next lesson. You may want to work together with your colleagues on developing a series of lessons on love and sexuality. Try also to include and not to separate the topic of homosexuality from (hetero)sexuality. If you talk about love and partnership in general you can also mention examples of same-sex love.

- Work on the teenagers' own direct experiences with gays, lesbians and migrants. What do they know about these topics? What is their experience with migrants, gays, lesbians or bisexuals in their family/surroundings?

- Don't underestimate the knowledge of children or teenagers. Even the younger ones can have an unlimited access to TV, films, and Internet and are exposed to the stereotypes provided by them. Children build myths to explain the gaps in their knowledge to themselves and to others. As a result, their knowledge of "differences" is incomplete. Try to help them to order their fragmentary knowledge and provide them new and balanced information . Myths like the notion that one can become gay or lesbian just through mutual masturbation or because one has touched people of the same sex are still strong and may cause irrational but intense fears.

- Consider inviting gay and/or lesbian people to take part in a discussion as experts. In some countries, there are volunteer (peer) projects to educate students on the topic of same-sex partnerships and lifestyles. Contact addresses can be found in the appendix.

In this section, we make a few suggestions to help readers cope with some specific questions gay, lesbian and bisexual clients may have. Although there are many different schools of thought and different counselling approaches, one element which remains common to all is the importance of the relationship between counsellor and client. In order to have an effective relationship, free from personal prejudice, you as the counsellor must have spent time reflecting on your own views on homosexuality. You should ask yourself questions so as to become aware of your own point of view and not to send the client negative messages, in particular through non-verbal behaviour.

Prejudice and stereotypes can be difficult to recognize even in contexts where homosexuality is no longer seen as a disease or deviant behaviour. As a counsellor you should be aware of the following issues (this is by no means an exhaustive list):

- do not automatically attribute a client's problems to her or his homosexual orientation

- recognize that a client's psychological symptoms can be influenced by his/her own internalised homophobia.

- be aware of the possible consequences if a lesbian, gay or bisexual person reveals his/her homosexuality to parents, to employers

- be aware of the effects of prejudice and discrimination upon the daily lives of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals

- recognise the possible effects of the multiple forms of social stigma carried by lesbians, bisexuals and gays who come from ethnic minorities. These individuals may face discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity as well as of their sexual orientation.

Another aspect to be considered is the different culturally-accepted definitions of adolescence – what it is, when it starts, etc. When a young male or female client of a different ethnic origin has just migrated to a western country, a counsellor must make an effort to understand the cultural expectations for young people of their gender and age group.

Background

What are sexual identity and orientation?

Sexuality is dealt with differently in the multitude of cultures and nations on Earth. Sex education identifies four functions of sexuality: 1. it provides lust and is an important motor in the reproduction of human life, 2. it can deepen relationships and is a code of intimate communication, 3. it plays an important role in the development of our identity because by experiencing sexuality, our identity as man or woman is confirmed (and we, in turn, confirm others), 4. it can enrich our lives on different levels. For instance, a sexual relationship can result in the conception of a child, or may also lead to other forms of creation (e.g. a house, a book, or another common project). These four functions of sexuality can be identified in relationships between two women, two men or a man and a woman.

Along with age, ethnic origin or social status, gender and sexuality are part of a multitude of aspects that constitute the identity of a person. Sexual identity is part of the basic understanding that a person has of her- or himself as a sexual being – how he/she perceives her- or himself and how he/she wants to be perceived by others. Its components are: the biological sex, psychological sex, gender identity and sexual identity of a person.

The first expression ("biological sex") means that one is physically a girl/ woman or a boy/ man. In one or two out of 2000 births the biological sex can not be clearly defined. In these cases we talk about "intersexuality". The second expression, "psychological sex", refers to a person's inner conviction of being a woman or a man or both at the same time. For example, some transgendered people don't regard themselves entirely as being part of one sex. This should not be confused with a transsexual person, who feels that his/her body doesn't have the right gender and sometimes wishes to make his/her biological sex correspond with this inner identity.

Gender identity refers to the mix of cultural and social norms and expectations on how men and women should behave in a given culture or society. These cultural expectation affect what appearance (clothing, hairstyle, etc.), body language and behaviour are classified as "female" or "male" in different cultures. The discrimination against women almost always concerns gender identity, not sexual identity as such.

Sexual orientation refers to whether one's sexuality is directed towards women, men or both sexes. The way people feel about their sexual orientation is often quite different from their sexual identity and reflects their personal identity.

Sexual identity, gender identity and sexual orientation identity are not static concepts: they can evolve and change. Throughout history and cultures, people have felt strongly and still have different feelings about these issues. For example, at every moment in history there have been women who have fallen in love with women and had sex with them, as well as men who have fallen in love with men and had sex with them. But they didn't necessarily identify as "lesbian" or "gay", because these concepts are relatively new.

Classifying people according to their sexual partners into hetero-, homo- and bisexuals is a cultural phenomenon, and therefore not "natural" or "God given". From this point of view, it becomes difficult to define exactly who is hetero-, homo- or bisexual. If a woman marries a man after having had a 12-year relationship with another woman, does she suddenly become heterosexual? Should a married man who regularly engaged in mutual masturbation with a friend when they were teenagers declare himself bisexual? Sexuality is much more than "just" sexual intercourse or having an orgasm. Human desire is very complex: every person has his/her own conceptions of love and sex (which are strongly linked to our cultural background and education). Sexual fantasy can differ strongly from real sexual activities, the personal judgement of these activities and how much someone identifies with them. What is respectively identified by society as a "straight", "bi", "lesbian" or "gay" varies from one individual to another and in principle can not be standardised.
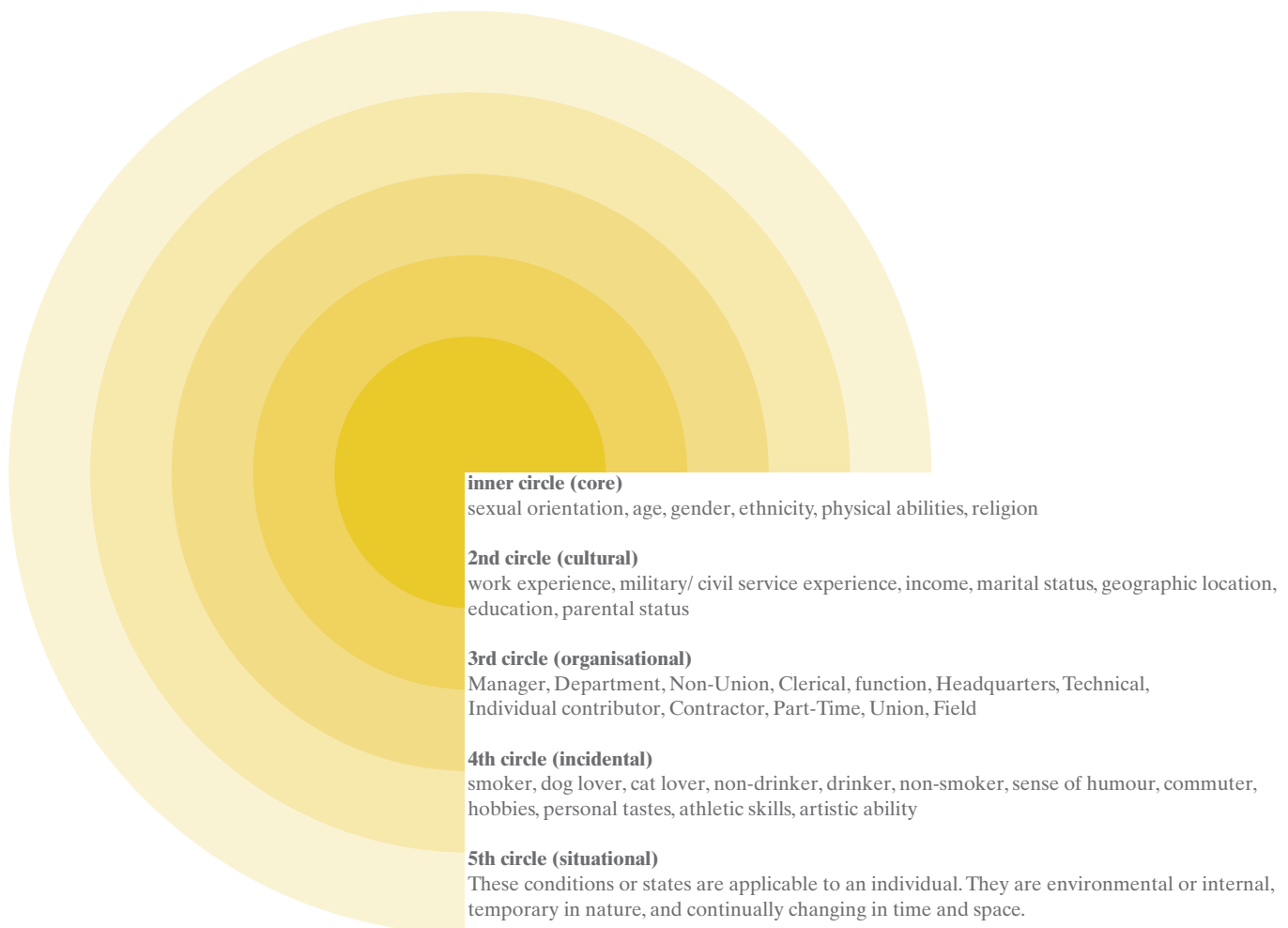
The classification of "homo-" and "heterosexuality" was created in the 1860s and was partially used to justify why same-sex behaviour wasn't considered as good as sex with a partner from the opposite sex. The fact that there existed a word to mark a difference in sexual behaviour also made it possible to establish the norm of heterosexuality that could develop much more impact on the individual's behaviour than before. A new species, "the homosexual", was born. Talking about this difference became an important instrument to exercise power on the individual for example by condemning the individual because of her or his sexual behaviour. Since the late 19th century there have been several movements in different Western countries to struggle for equal rights for lesbian, bisexual and gay people. Today the way homosexuality is valued in some cultures and societies has changed in a positive way. In a few countries like Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands and in Scandinavia, lesbians and gays have the same or nearly the same rights but even there many people still discriminate socially against homosexuals.

Over the last 10 to 20 years, researchers have found that public discussions about different sexual orientations force young people to choose whether they define themselves as hetero- or homosexual. It appears that, today, some young people, boys especially, refrain from having homosexual contacts because they are afraid of being stigmatised as gays or lesbians. Here we are only talking about lesbian and gay teenagers. A defined bisexual identity, like it is formulated by adult bisexuals for themselves, rarely exists for young adults. In a phase where sexual identity is just developing, it is problematic to talk about bisexual teenagers as if they defined themselves as such already. Therefore the formulation "young people who (also) feel attracted by persons of their own sex" would be more appropriate. To facilitate writing and in order to name clearly the existence of lesbian and gay themselves, who identify as and call themselves lesbian or gay, in the following text we chose the expression "lesbian and gay teenagers"

Recent studies on sexuality suggest that, although most people have at least some erotic thoughts or fantasies about both sexes, only a minority actually dares to act on these desires. Today's western cultures and societies force us to define ourselves either as hetero- or homosexual, and in this context bisexuality is not always seen as an category in its own right. One reason for this is that many people find it extremely difficult to have an in-between identity. Another reason is that homosexual contacts are still scorned by many people and therefore cause fear, especially among teenagers who do not yet feel secure with their own sexual orientation.

Like sexual identity, gender identity and sexual orientation, ethnicity is composed of a multitude of aspects. Current understanding of the individual's identity is not that of a stable definition from childhood on but rather that of an early biographical concept that can change with time although there may be aspects that stay the same. Building up an identity is not only an individual accomplishment. We all use more or less traditional examples and role patterns to get orientation and form an identity that is adapted to us. Identities have the character of a patchwork, because they consist of diverse factors. It is therefore not possible to talk of an essence of for instance Belgians, Muslims, workers or lesbians because the way a person acts is not only determined by one issue exclusively but by multiple aspects at the same time (see figure). Also the concept of "culture" is not seen as a static, homogenous, hermetic and closed system anymore and there are also indications that sexual orientation is more flexible than many of us might think.

Diversity – Different in more ways than one

inner circle (core)
sexual orientation, age, gender, ethnicity, physical abilities, religion

2nd circle (cultural)
work experience, military/ civil service experience, income, marital status, geographic location, education, parental status

3rd circle (organisational)
Manager, Department, Non-Union, Clerical, function, Headquarters, Technical, Individual contributor, Contractor, Part-Time, Union, Field

4th circle (incidental)
smoker, dog lover, cat lover, non-drinker, drinker, non-smoker, sense of humour, commuter, hobbies, personal tastes, athletic skills, artistic ability

5th circle (situational)
These conditions or states are applicable to an individual. They are environmental or internal, temporary in nature, and continually changing in time and space.

What is discrimination?

In everyday life homophobia leads to social and legal discrimination. Legal discrimination is the unequal treatment of homosexuals and heterosexuals when it comes to international agreements, national or local laws like a lesser or inexistent acceptance of same-sex partnerships. Social discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of people by institutions, companies, the media or other individuals.

Sexual orientation compared to other discrimination grounds
By discrimination we mean that a person or a group of persons is treated differently than others. Discriminated people bear a so-called "stigma". People who display this mark or attribute are treated differently because society feels they are less worthy of the same rights or respect as others. Such "stigmas" are for example sex, ethnic origin, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability.

However, sexual orientation and religion stand out in this list, because they are not visible in themselves. A person who feels attracted to the same sex has to show this to make the "stigma" visible. It follows that homosexuals can avoid being discriminated against by hiding their feelings. This makes discrimination on sexual orientation different from other grounds of discrimination such as ethnic origin, that cannot always be hidden to others because of skin colour, language or other characteristics.

Negative social attitudes against visible homosexuality result in a certain amount of invisibility of homosexuality, especially in everyday life. Many lesbians, bisexuals and gay men try to avoid negative reactions by behaving according to heterosexist expectations or, in other words, by pretending to be heterosexual. This is called 'passing' or 'acting straight'. Heterosexuals add to this by maintaining silence concerning sexual orientation or even by maintaining a full taboo on discussing it. Lesbians and gays often don't dare to talk about their partner or to show openly their partnership by holding each other's hands in public areas because they are afraid of negative reactions. Such reactions could lead in the worst cases to losing their job or losing a good contact to their family. To live with such a fear for a long time can burden a relationship and even be fatal to it.

Like lesbians and gays, migrants also have to fight against prejudice, because in the view of the majority they differ from norms and conventions or rules. Lesbians and gays are supposed to be incapable of having long-term relationships, sex-oriented, and incapable of looking after children. Ethnic groups are often portrayed as consisting mainly of criminals, or as interested only by the advantages offered by the host society. Such stereotypes can have negative consequences for the members of both groups (ethnic minority or homosexual community) on the work market or if they want to create social contacts with others. Concerning persons of ethnic groups the reasons for their disadvantage are mainly related to their culture (eating habits…) or clothing (headscarf…). Concerning lesbians and gays the reason for discrimination is related to their non-conformity in their choice of partner, migrants who love persons of the same sex and/ or have sex with them often suffer from multiple discrimination. On the one hand many lesbians and gays are prejudiced against them and on the other hand their families don't support them in their lifestyle the way they need to be supported because they think that homosexuality is not reconcilable with their tradition, culture, or religion.

How does discrimination work?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to explain some concepts and terms which are essential for the understanding of how discrimination works. This manual however focuses on the psycho-social aspects of discrimination.

Racism
Racism is an ideological, structural and historic stratification process by which the population of one specific descent (ex. Caucasian descent) intentionally has been able to sustain, to its own best advantage, the dynamic mechanics of upward or downward mobility to the general disadvantage of the population designated as, for instance, "non-white". The emphasis put on some differences, like skin colour, ethnicity or non-western nationality are used to enforce decisions that contribute to decisive changes in relative racial standing in ways that favour most the populations designated as 'white.' The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination very clearly states that discrimination between human beings on the ground of race, colour or ethnic origin is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It seems questionable to call the members of minority cultures who are prejudiced against members of the majority culture of the country they live in "racist", because their attitude does not lead to the same consequences of privilege or power accumulation. There is a difference between everyday and institutional racism (e.g. disadvantages when searching for an apartment or actual laws of the labour market). The following definitions will show that gays and lesbians are in a relatively similar relationship/position concerning the "dominant culture".

Homophobia and homonegativity
Homophobia is often defined as fear, aversion, intolerance, and hatred of homosexuality and of homosexuals as well as of their lifestyles or cultures. Researchers explain it as an intense, irrational apprehension because there are no objective reasons to fear lesbians, gays or their way of life. These prejudiced feelings fuel the myths, stereotypes, discrimination and violence against people who are homo- or bisexual. Lesbians, gay and bisexual people who are socialised in a homophobic society often internalise these negative stereotypes and can develop some degree of low self-esteem and self-hatred. This is described as 'internalised homophobia'.

Some critics have observed that the word "homophobia" can be problematic. Firstly, people with a phobia in a clinical sense (e.g., claustrophobia, agoraphobia) try to avoid the objects of their fear. However, people who express hostility toward lesbians and gay men do not manifest these physiological reactions to homosexuality that are otherwise associated with other phobias. On the contrary, homophobes are sometimes preoccupied in an excessive manner with homosexuality and try to actively combat it. Second, using homophobia implies that anti-lesbian and antigay prejudice is an individual, clinical entity. This however – like in the case of racism – is not true. Homophobia is rather a social phenomenon rooted in cultural ideologies and inter-group relations.

Since the discrimination of lesbians, gay and bisexual persons does not take the clinical form of a "phobia", social scientists nowadays often prefer to use the term "homo-negativity" or "sexual prejudice", which refers to the whole range of negative feelings, attitudes and behaviour towards homosexuals. However, most non-scientists, like teachers and counsellors, still prefer the word "homophobia" while using it in the sense of "homo-negativity". In this manual we will use the word "homophobia" in this sense as well.

Heteronormativity

Here we refer to values and norms; the two are analytically distinguishable, but in fact they form an intertwined framework of ideas about how people should function and how they should behave. On the subject of 'sexual feelings', most people will expect that everyone is heterosexual. On the subject of 'gender', most people will expect that everyone is either "man" or "woman" and will behave according to set gender role patterns. Not being or behaving according to these patterns often creates a lot of insecurity in people, which may lead to negative and discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, as transgender people can testify.

Most people will implicitly rank 'male' features higher than 'female' features, and men who show 'female' traits are thus regarded "as" women and despised in many societies for voluntarily giving up their powerful position. Lesbians are often seen as negligible and suffer from a double discrimination: as women and as homosexual people. These examples should give an idea of the connection between heterosexism, discrimination of lesbians and gays and sexism and show how social norms and values work together and contribute to influence the behaviour of an individual by social exclusion and discrimination. Heterosexuals also suffer from disadvantages produced by heterosexism. They also are being reduced to typical role models. This can lead to conflicts when discussing division of tasks in a partnership (e.g. concerning domestic chores and earning the money). Conforming to a norm causes pressure and prevents people from fully developing their capacities and personality. Men in particular rarely have close friendships with other men and avoid body contact to them in order not be seen as "sissified" or "gay".

Concerning 'relationships', most people hope to find a romantic, everlasting, monogamous relationship, a family, and, in extreme cases, believe that sex is only meant to produce children. Finally, many people will be fearful of behaviour or ideas that differ too much from those of their own community. They will denounce behaviour that in their opinion is going 'too far'. They will strive to keep 'deviant' behaviour as invisible as possible.

Now the link between heterosexism and homophobia is obvious. Homophobia is also part of a social and ideological perspective which promotes specific forms of role behaviour and romance, as well as norms for relationships and social organisation. This framework is also called "the norm of heterosexuality" because the prescriptive norm proposes the traditional heterosexual relationship as the only valid lifestyle.

People feel a need for inner coherence and to be socially accepted. One important factor leading to intolerance may be that people feel unsure whether they are able to maintain a socially acceptable identity and status. This insecurity may lead to holding too tenaciously to rigid concepts of identity and related norms. To reassure themselves and others that one's own identity is of the highest value, people may 'punish' others who do not conform and project all kinds of discreditable behaviour and characteristics on to them. Many current ethnic tensions may also be attributed to this process.

Shapes of homophobia

Negative or discriminatory behaviour comes in a range of gradations:
- Social exclusion
- Denial of rights
- Bullying
- Threatening behaviour
- Violence

Social distance and bullying are the forms of discrimination most encountered in the everyday life of homosexuals. Violence is of course the most severe form. Sometimes people are insulted or even physically attacked, their property destroyed and sometimes their organisations, institutions and meeting places are damaged.

A vicious circle strengthening homophobia and racism

Discrimination can be viewed as a vicious circle of events. If a person is different from what is ideologically considered as 'normal', this may cause others to feel uncertainty or even fear. This first primary *emotion* may lead to a negative *attitude*, which in turn may lead to negative *behaviour*. Many gay, lesbian and bisexual people try to avoid such discrimination by "passing"/ "acting straight" or pretending to be heterosexual. This way they become 'invisible' as homosexuals and only those gay men and lesbian women who do not hide are visible. Of course, the people who act most 'deviant' (relative to traditional heteronormative expectations) stand out the most. Forced 'passing' behaviour thus leads to selective images of homosexuality. This serves to promote the general perception of all homosexuals as "deviant", which links to the negative emotions which start off the cycle. As these images are perceived to be more and more deviant, more and more fear and resentment are created. As a result, the chances that negative attitudes and behaviour will follow also increase (see figure 2). As such, the psycho-social process of discrimination can be viewed as a vicious circle that tends to strengthen itself. Discrimination on the ground of ethnic origin can also be explained through this theoretical framework.

The Process of Discrimination
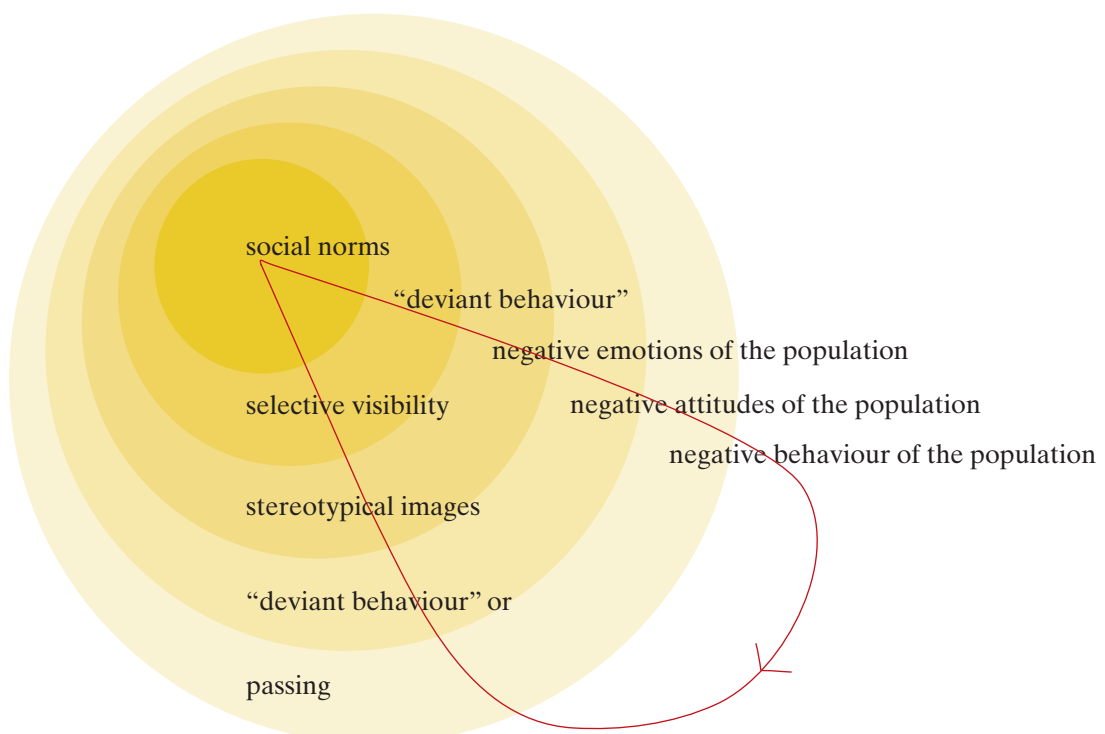
Flexible identities in safe environments

When intolerance is rooted in the act of holding on to rigid concepts of identity and related norms, then an effective counter-measure would be to support the creation and support of "flexible" identities. People with "flexible" identities, as opposed to those with "rigid" ones, are more flexible in terms of changing their behaviour and lifestyle in response to new needs and circumstances. Such people feel safe because they know their self-esteem and their happiness does not depend on the norms of others. Changing circumstances are interesting to them and do not necessarily pose a threat.

In order for more flexible identities to exist, safe conditions must be created. This requires an explicit definition of how people want to deal with each other, with differences and diversity, with things that may be frightening, and what they need in order to feel safe.

Setting objectives

In order for more flexible identities to exist, safe conditions must be created. This requires an explicit definition of how people want to deal with each other, with differences and diversity, with things that may be frightening, and what they need in order to feel safe.

First, it is important to explore which results you want to attain. In general, it is possible to formulate two aims relating to the education and counselling on homosexuality targeted at teenagers and adolescents. The first aim concerns the 'average' teenager and could be expressed simply as "less discrimination among young people". The second aim is directed more towards those teenagers with lesbian, bisexual or homosexual feelings within the larger target group. Here, the specific aim would be to help these young people accept their feelings and to give those feelings a place in their lives which fits into these persons' social and personal situation.

These aims are very general and it is difficult to measure whether, or to what extent, they have been attained. Consider the following questions: If we say that one aim is to increase self-acceptance, what precisely does this mean? Does it mean that teenagers should be more open about their feelings, or is there another meaning? Does this concern tolerance and acceptance towards "normal" homosexuals or does it include the respect of all types of gay and lesbian lifestyles? Similarly, if it is stated that the aim is "less discrimination", which specific discriminatory attitudes or behaviour are we referring to? Do we expect teenagers to stop homosexual name-calling after only one education session, or do we expect the participants in such a session to agree that homosexuals should be allowed to marry? These objectives are quite different and some of them cannot be fully attained within the context of the classroom.

General strategies for improvement

The actual battle against intolerance should be fought on all levels of the vicious circle described above. However, in this manual, we focus on what you can do in your own classroom or counselling sessions.

- Debating alternatives to heterosexist social norms so as to question social norms and see when they are dysfunctional, and to correct stereotypes, is a good starting point.
- In individual contacts, it is possible to deal with negative emotions, especially when the fears and anger that are part of these emotions are acknowledged. This is often very difficult for members of discredited groups, because they may feel they have to confront the 'enemy'. Asking them to then to understand the fears and anger of intolerant people places extremely high demands on them.
- For group and media work, it is best to focus on attitude change. This can be done by making people think about whether their negative ideas are based on reality, and whether they are helpful in society.
- In settings where actual behaviour can be controlled, focusing directly on behaviour change, for example by setting ground rules and correcting negative behaviour, may be an option.

It is important to realise that teenagers cannot immediately go from homophobic behaviour to tolerance or even acceptance. Homophobia and heteronormativity are not massive 'entities' that can be changed all at once. Rather they are frameworks with a range of values and norms relating to several themes. Depending on the group, or on the individual, one issue (like sexuality) may be a particular problem, while another may play a less important role. It is important for professionals to learn to look analytically, at themselves and at their students or clients, in order to recognise the areas and phases each are in. Educators in particular, but also counsellors have to set intermediary objectives and support the personal development of their students or clients step by step. For instance in a group where there is considerable resistance against any information about homosexuality, it is unrealistic to aim at attitude change. In such a case, the focus should be first and foremost on raising sensibility on the subject before expecting real involvement from the teenagers. In a group where teenagers are willing to be tolerant and have already made up their opinions in class discussions, it may turn out that focussing on transferring this tolerance into action is not possible and may suddenly meet with resistance. In such cases, it might be that some young people are merely following a social norm when expressing "tolerance", while their own views have not been 'worked through' yet. If this is the case, you should spend some time first on 'appreciating' the tolerant attitude the teenagers want to express (for example by discussing which concrete examples of homosexuality you do or don't accept) and then to put this level of tolerance or acceptance into personal context (for instance when a pupil states that she can understand monogamous homosexual relationships, but not promiscuity, because she herself wants a monogamous relationship.)

Dealing with prejudice

Above all, it is important to tell the truth. It is tempting to 'correct' stereotypical images about homosexuality and bisexuality by trying to deny them. "No, homosexuals do not like to provoke others!" Such a statement does not work, especially when teenagers actually have seen homosexuals by whom they have felt "provoked", and it does not take the teenagers' comment seriously. Although they are exaggerations, stereotypes usually have a basis in reality. For example, some homosexuals make jokes about rigid heterosexual behaviour or mimic exaggerated homosexual behaviour, which they do mainly because they feel intimidated by this type of behaviour and want to make it less threatening. This is a form of self-defence, like minority humour often is, but can also be read as a provocation, even though it has a reason and context. That is why it is strategically better to explore the background of such phenomena than to simply deny the contents of prejudice. This means that educators and counsellors need to have sufficient information about gay, bisexual and lesbian lifestyles. If straight teenagers feel provoked by homosexuals, this must be taken seriously. However, the reason for feeling provoked is linked to heterosexual norms, and not necessarily to the "fact" that one gay or lesbian wants to provoke someone. Even when a homosexual person tries to make a pass at a heterosexual person (we are not referring to sexual harassment here), heterosexuals can learn to refuse this in a calm way without feeling provoked in their sexual identity or orientation.

Dealing with negative behaviour

It is also important to accept that everyone has emotions and personal judgements concerning the subjects of homosexuality and bisexuality. Educators and counsellors should learn to recognise and to map these, especially when the judgements are negative. This can only be done by giving the young people space and by taking a lot of time to explore personal feelings. It is better not to forbid or deny discriminatory/negative comments, but to see them instead as potential discussion topics and use them to explore means of developing new and more respectful behaviour. This implies that educators and counsellors are willing to build up a relationship of trust with the young people.

Dealing with your own feelings

as an educator or counsellor, you should realise that your own feelings and opinions on homosexuality, bisexuality and heterosexism can influence your teaching or counselling. Teenagers will quickly pick up on a teacher's or counsellor's personal bias or on a mental panic when a teenager makes a negative comment.

It is natural for heterosexuals to have difficulty imagining what it is like to be homosexual. You may try to be "tolerant" but at the same time feel "uneasy" when imaging sexual acts between two people of the same sex.

If you notice you feel insecure in relation to the subject of homosexuality, it is better to explore and share those feelings than to deny or hide them.

Dealing with different groups

Different groups react differently during discussions about homosexuality. An individual's age, level of education, local environment, and cultural and/or ethnic background all contribute to determining how they feel and how they formulate their opinions. For some, the fear of not being accepted may be important as well. For others, a religious conviction will have a lot of influence. Effective counselling or education should take these influences into account. Although most teenagers in Europe will have quite heterosexist ideas, the background and origin of these ideas will likely differ and will need to be explored.

One way to do this in either a group or individual situation is to start a session by asking some questions in an association exercise about homosexuality. Such an exercise cuts two ways. It gives the teenagers an opportunity to voice their opinions and air their emotions. It also gives the educator or counsellor a quick overview of the group 'map' of emotions, attitudes and questions concerning sexual preference, gender issues, and sexuality.

Dealing with cultural differences

To overcome the reluctance of teenagers to debate, a comprehensive/ holistic approach offers advantages if the educator or counsellor is able to create an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. Then pupils will be open for arguments. A crucial point is that there should be space for them to talk about their expectations, fears and sorrow in the beginning. They absolutely need the possibility to express their stereotypes and prejudice without fearing the consequences. When dealing with different cultures it is also important for educators and counsellors to know the living conditions of their pupils or clients and that they explore them together with them so that teenagers feel taken seriously and accepted.

It might also be helpful to develop a school programme or common declaration of all people involved in one institution where dealing with each other is described as well as mutual respect and banning of discrimination is agreed on. In this context it should be explicitly mentioned that no one has the right to discriminate against a person because of her/ his gender, ethnic origin, age, disability or sexual orientation. Such a declaration should be developed, together with all people concerned, especially the teenagers.

Recommendation for an intercultural dialogue
(quoted from Georg Auernheimer, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Pädagogik*, 2003)

- Don't take a defensive or missionary position. Get rid of your distrust.

- Separate the person from the "issue". This means you shouldn't make the respect you have for your partner in conversation depend on how you judge her/his different system of norms or perception of the world.

- Don't use an inappropriate standard of value. Don't compare the ideals of your own culture with the different social reality of others.

- Don't fight wars of belief, try to find a solution for each situation instead, or a certain area in life! Eventually go for a third way.

- Take into account that the person in front of you may have experienced discrimination.

- Take into consideration the functionality that many traditional models have (had) for the reproduction of society.

- Accept the struggle for a cultural identity, but defend the rights of the individual.

Suggested strategies for managing heterosexism and homophobia in schooling and youth work
(partially quoted from *Project 10 handbook*, Friends of Project 10, Los Angeles 1989)

- Include lesbian and gay issues in your curriculum by discussing these topics when appropriate, as they apply to specific courses.

- Include gay and lesbian issues in you lesson plans and syllabus as possible discussion topics for the class.

- Include readings which address lesbian and gay issues on required and recommended reading lists.

- Include gay and lesbian issues on a list of possible and required topics for written assignments or class presentations.

- Implement lesson plans to address the issue of homophobic name-calling.

- Develop or obtain specific lesson plans concerning homophobia and heterosexism to implement in your classes.

- Encourage all students to think about, write about and discuss the ways in which homophobia has impacted their lives.

- Educate yourself about lesbian and gay people who have made significant contributions Acknowledge their sexual orientation as it relates to their contributions which you are discussing in class, e.g. Jane Adams, James Baldwin, Gertrude Stein, Walt Whitman and many others.

- Invite lesbian or gay people, or parents of gays and lesbians as guest speakers when appropriate.

- Be familiar with local gay and lesbian resources and curricular materials like social or political organisations, health care agencies, counselling services, youth groups, readings and film materials and use them in your class.

- Use non-gender specific language like "partner", "lover", "person" consistently whenever discussions about relationships or partner-choice situations arise.

- Interrupt anti-gay or anti-lesbian comments by staff and student alike. State that attacks and derogatory jokes, behaviour or other actions against anyone because of perceived difference on the basis of sexual orientation is unfair, offensive and harmful.

- Prominently display pamphlets and resource guides for lesbian, gay and bisexual communities in and around counsellors' offices.

- Encourage comprehensive professional staff development and training regarding heterosexism and homophobia.

Glossary

Acceptance means to demonstratively advocate for and actively support minorities, marginal groups and non-conformists (see also -> tolerance).

Anti-Lesbian and Anti-Gay Violence There are different kinds of anti-lesbian and anti-gay violence: physical, psychical, sexualized, verbal, and structural violence. In extreme cases, homophobic individuals specifically seek out places where lesbians and gays meet in order to physically attack and hurt them. However, physical violence is usually not planned but is rather spontaneous and most often occurs when violent people recognize gays or lesbians in public. Those responsible often call this violent behaviour "gay bashing". If someone is a victim of anti-gay violence, most large European cities have special police officers to handle these cases.

Bisexuality -> Sexuality

Christopher Street Day (CSD) -> Stonewall

Coming-out When a lesbian, gay or bisexual person decides to openly show or talk about their homo-/bisexuality, this is called "coming out of the closet" or "coming out". It is possible to distinguish between an "inner" and an "outside" coming out. When someone starts to identify as gay and eventually accepts his or her homosexuality, this is called the "inner" coming out. When the same person starts to tell and demonstrate to other people that he/she is homosexual, this is called the "outside" coming out. Coming out is always a process and never a definite moment or point in time.

Community the word refers to all gay/lesbian venues in a city, like bars, clubs, discos, centres, etc. The expression "to visit the gay scene" has a similar meaning, and refers in this context to the fact of going to gay/lesbian venues.

Cross-dresser one who cross-dresses, who (regularly or occasionally, fully or partially) wears clothing intended for the other sex. A cross-dresser may be hetero-, homo- or bisexual.

"Cure" of homosexual feelings Some lesbians, gays or bisexuals (and also sometimes their parents) encounter enormous difficulties while living in a heterosexist world and wish to live as a heterosexual instead. But as homo- and bisexuality are not diseases or mental disorders, it is not possible to "cure" such feelings. Some people, often those with strong religious views, think homo-/bisexual desires can be cured and they support their arguments with examples of people who used to live out their homosexual feelings, but who now live a heterosexual life. Some religious organisations use dubious techniques in order to block sexual desire and create a feeling of guilt. But these people may very well only be suppressing their homosexual feelings in order to live a heterosexual life.

Discrimination Means that different people are treated unequally without an objective reason and in our society there is a large scale of different sorts of discrimination. This scale reaches from being called names or bullied, to ignorance of different ways of life as well as to physical violence up to murder. One has to make a difference between structural discrimination such as in legislation, criminalisation and pathologisation, institutional discrimination, e.g. banning gays from certain professions, ignorance, concealment, and individual discrimination like being insulted, psychological or physical violence. - > Heteronormativity, -> Heterosexism, -> Labelling, and -> Gay Marriage.

The new anti-discrimination legislation provides legally enforceable rights for all people in all EU countries for instance the implementation of equal treatment between people regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, or the equal treatment in employment and training. The ban on discrimination – or to put it differently – the 'principle of equal treatment' means that there shall be no direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation whatsoever. The expression "direct discrimination" refers to a situation in which one person is treated less favourably than another. Indirect discrimination occurs where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons belonging to one of the minority groups at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons. However, allowances for limited exceptions to the principle of equal treatment have been made, for example to preserve the ethos of religious organisations or to allow special schemes to promote the integration of older or younger workers into the labour market.

Diversity & Diversity Management Diversity refers to any mixture of items characterized by difference and similarities like racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability or sexual orientation and identity. Diversity Management means that companies actively implement diversity policies – that is policies that seeks to encourage a mix of races, sexual orientation and identity, religions, physical disabilities, ages and sexes within the company. Companies who implement those policies can expect benefits like more satisfied colleagues, a better working atmosphere on the short and long term (see http://www.stop-discrimination.info).

European Union During their meeting in Amsterdam in 1997, fifteen EU Member States committed themselves to fight against discrimination and to promote equality. Since this date, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation may no longer be used as a basis for discrimination. The European Commission has presented a number of proposals to support Member States as they strive to act against unequal treatment (including Article 13 of the EC Treaty, in effect since 1 May 1999 as well as Directive 2000/78/EC dated 27 November 2000 which establishes general rules regarding equal treatment in working matters).

Gay bashing -> "Anti-Gay Violence"

Gay or lesbian marriage / registered partnership / residence permission Some European countries now have special laws granting legal status to homosexual couples. These laws differ from country to country and many nations still have no legislation on homosexual partnerships whatsoever. But even if laws do exist, they rarely guarantee the same conditions for gay couples as the ones granted to heterosexual couples. A very important aspect of partnership laws for homosexual couples is whether or not the law grants residence permits for bi-national couples, especially if one of them comes from outside Europe. In countries that do not have such laws, lesbians, gays or bisexuals have very little chance to obtain residence permits for their non-European partners.

Gender in contrast to the word "sex" that stands for the biological sex of a person, "gender" means the culturally and socially defined gender role and identity of a woman or a man. In every culture specific tasks and roles are attributed to each gender. The decision whether a man works in order to finance a family and a woman stays at home to raise children is often justified by a constructed concept of "nature". In reality it is done because of cultural traditions and social conventions.

Heteronormativity and heterosexism mean that heterosexuality is defined as "normality" and ideologically as the only accepted form of sexuality within a society. Heterosexism has effects on a structural, institutional, social and individual level. Heterosexism is the basis for discrimination and even anti-lesbian and anti-gay violence. Heterosexism forces lesbians, gays or bisexuals to repeatedly "out" themselves, as they must constantly re-assess their sexual orientation in a way that heterosexuals are not obliged to do. This is a discrimination that most heterosexual people are not aware of.

Heterosexism is also in law because in many countries there is no or only a "second class" possibility to marry or register a partnership for lesbians and gays. If a person is asked to fill in a questionnaire and then has to choose between the boxes "married", "single" or "divorced", this is also an example of heterosexism because it only considers heterosexual kinds of partnership.

Heterosexuality -> Sexuality

Homophobia This describes a group of emotions which include feelings of anxiety, disgust, aversion, anger, discomfort and hate of lesbians, gays and bisexuals. A number of researchers have criticized the term because homophobia is not a classic phobia. In comparison with other phobias like hydrophobia or arachnophobia homosexuals are not the direct source of "fear" or "discomfort". It is rather a sort of anti-homosexuality or homonegativity that includes cultural values and norms that label homosexuals as something to be feared. In this perspective, homophobia is not a disease to be cured, but rather an attitude which should be positively influenced.

Homosexuality -> Sexuality

Homo-specific counselling This is a form of counselling which is usually, but not necessarily, given by lesbian or gay counsellors to lesbian or gay clients. This is a useful approach to the counselling process because, as in the counselling of migrants, it is important for many gays and lesbians to know that the counsellor her-/himself is experienced in homosexual topics. Without this source of empathy, gay or lesbian clients often feel that they have to explain feelings or issues that they may not yet understand themselves and are afraid they will not be accepted. While homo-specific counselling does not require that the counsellors be gay or lesbian themselves, they should at least be well-acquainted with the local gay community in order to pass on appropriate advice to their clients. When conducting homo-specific counselling, it is, of course, very important that the counsellor accepts homosexuality as an equal form of sexuality and tries to help the client to live a fulfilling homosexual life.

Internalised homophobia Internalised homophobia is a central theme in working with lesbian, gay and bisexual clients. It is virtually impossible for lesbians, gays and bisexuals not to have internalised at least some negative messages about their sexuality if they have been raised in a western society. These negative messages can result in homosexuals feeling a kind of "self-hatred" towards this part of their own identity. Internalised homophobia can manifest itself in different feelings and emotions like fear of discovery; discomfort around open lesbians, gays and bisexuals, rejection and denigration of all heterosexuals or a feeling of being superior to heterosexuals. Persons with internalised homophobia may believe that lesbians, gays and bisexuals are not different from heterosexuals, yet they may be afraid of being rejected because others perceive them as different. They may be attracted to unavailable people, such as people of another sexual orientation who are unavailable as intimate partners. This can be a form of psychological self-protection against real intimacy. They may have difficulty maintaining long-term relationships, as their internal homophobia can turn against their (homosexual) partner as well.

Intersexuality The sex of a human being is determined by genetics, hormones and psychosocial factors. Differences between chromosomal sex, gonadal sex (ovaries, testes) primary as well as secondary characters of sex, that are controlled hormonally, are called intersexuality. This occurs in one of 2000 births. Sexual identity mostly develops before the 14th month of life but can still change afterwards. Changes in the development of a foetus can influence primary as well as secondary characters of sex and hence lead to intersexuality. Intersexual people can show more often than in the rest of the population a lack of gender identification with their assigned gender or gender identity, a disorder which sometimes leads to the wish to change their sex. Many intersexuals report considerable traumas caused by medical treatments, especially of shame because of being "different", but also shame due to possible surgical procedures and their consequences (e.g., they lost the capacity to experience sexual pleasure). In some countries there are self-help groups for intersexuals.

Labelling To "label" a person means that a quality, characteristic, or type of behaviour is assigned to a lesbian, gay or bisexual solely on the basis of their sexual orientation. The qualities labelled onto lesbians, gays or bisexuals are frequently the result of stereotypical ideas: for instance, "Gays are 'effeminate' men", "Lesbians have been 'disappointed' by men", "Lesbians behave in a 'masculine' way". The effect of labelling can be very strong on the recipients. If a person is exposed to such kind of labelling for an extended period, she/he may actually start to demonstrate the labelled quality because this is how the individual is treated and it is what the outside environment expects. In a sociological context, this is called a "self-fulfilling prophecy".

LGBT is a frequently used abbreviation in the international context to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual issues.

Lifestyle A lifestyle is defined as a coherent set of behaviours, perspectives and ideologies held by an individual or a group of individuals. Together, these define the way a person wants to live, so we refer to a subjective interpretation of reality. As such, it is not possible to refer to an "alcoholic life-style" when a person is addicted to alcohol, but it is possible to refer to a "same-sex lifestyle" when a person chooses to openly live her or his homosexuality. It is important to know that there is no general definition of gay or lesbian lifestyles. A lifestyle can encompass aspects of identity, sexuality, relationships, work, housing etc., but it is a very individual matter that cannot be related to a group of people in general.

Norm of heterosexuality -> Heteronormativity

Outing Outing means the practice of making the homosexuality of certain public figures known (in the media) against their will. The practice gained media attention in the 1980s and 1990s as radical lesbian and gay activists threatened to publicize the name of those homosexuals who were responsible for homophobic laws or social and clerical attitudes. Not all lesbians and gays approve of outing and some condemn it as infringing the individuals' right to privacy.

Sexuality Sexuality encompasses any kind of human sexual behaviour. Sexuality implies not only sex acts, but also sexual fantasies, sexual orientation, etc. The three main kinds of sexual orientation are heterosexuality (a preference for sexual activity with someone of the opposite sex), bisexuality (enjoying sexual activity with partners of either sex) and homosexuality (a preference for having sex with someone of the same sex). It is important to note that there are no strict borders between the different kinds of sexual orientation, and they should rather be seen as fluid. The American researcher Alfred Kinsey, for instance, found out in the 1950s that there are very few people who can be considered 100% hetero- or homosexual. These terms only indicate an orientation; they do not describe sexuality in its entirety.

Sexual identity is part of the basic understanding that a person has of her- or himself as a sexual being – how he/she perceives her- or himself and how he/she wants to be perceived by others. This understanding includes four basic components: the biological sex (one is physically a girl/ woman or a boy/ man or has -> intersexual aspects of being a woman and being a man at the same time), the social sex as gender role (look, appearance, body language and behaviour that are classified as "female" or "male" in certain cultures), the psychological sex, which is to say the sexual identity (the inner conviction of being either a woman or a man or both at the same time) and the sexual orientation (to which sex one is erotically attracted). A person is not necessarily consistent concerning these four aspects of her/ his sexual identity (-> cross-dresser/ transvestite, -> sexual orientation, -> transsexual, -> transgender).

Sexual orientation is the sexual attraction felt towards other people. A sexual attraction can be felt towards one's own gender, towards the opposite gender or towards both. Sexuality involves more than just sex – it is not simply a question of whom one chooses have sex with. It also includes emotional needs and the need to feel safe within a relationship with another human being. Researchers have shown that sexual activity, fantasy and identity are not always congruent.

S.T.D. an acronym for Sexually Transmitted Disease (-> S.T.I.)

S.T.I. an acronym for Sexually Transmitted Infection; these can be spread by sexual practices like anal, vaginal or oral sex but also through contact with infectious body fluids. Some common STIs include AIDS, syphilis, hepatitis B, gonorrhoea or genital herpes.

Stereotypes Fixed negative beliefs shared within one social group in relation to another social group, stereotypes are characterised by generalisation and ethno-centrism (exaggerated attribution of positive qualities to one's own group and negative to the external group). There are four kinds of stereotypes regarding homosexuality: stereotypes related to gender non-conformity (for instance on lesbians as "butch"); stereotypes related to the social role (lesbian, gays and bisexuals are said to be deviant and transgressive); stereotypes related to relationships and sexual behaviour (gays are said to be paedophile and promiscuous; lesbians are said to have an immature sexuality); stereotypes related to the causes of homosexuality (a parent of a gay boy had wanted a daughter, a boy's lack of a father figure, sexual abuse …).

Stigma is a characteristic feature of an individual, for example the colour of the skin, or the sexual orientation. When such a feature marks an individual as different from those of the majority, it can used as a reason for discrimination. While skin colour is a visible stigma that cannot be hidden, homosexuality is an invisible stigma, which means that one can hardly identify it unless the person openly mentions it him or herself. Invisible stigmas like homosexuality can lead to strong dilemmas. A gay or lesbian person knows that if they "come out", their invisible stigma will be revealed. This could make them more vulnerable, as some people could use the stigma against them.

Stonewall "Stonewall Inn" is the name of a gay pub on Christopher Street in New York City. At the end of the 1960s, gay pubs in the city were often subjected to police raids. On the 27th of June, 1969, the Stonewall Inn was raided, but this time the cross dressers, gays and lesbians defended them-selves against the police. This resulted in a huge street riot which lasted for three days. Many of the rioters were transgendered people, often belonging to ethnic minorities. Stonewall was the first time that gays and lesbians fought back and stood up for the right to live their own lives. The Stonewall emblem thus produced a popular re-appropriation of history and a collective memory for homo-sexuals, making it easier to get rid of stigma and shame, and act as proud citizens whose inalienable rights were being violated. This event marked the beginning of the American gay and lesbian move-ment. Today, it is commemorated by annual celebrations and gay pride marches in most of the large cities around the world. In European countries, the celebration is commonly referred to as gay pride parade or Christopher Street Day (CSD) that sometimes become absorbed as an institution by mainstream culture. The parades now attract tourists as well as sponsoring businesses.

Subculture and Community The gay and lesbian subculture or community is similar but wider than the term -> scene. The terms subculture and community imply certain gay and lesbian venues like bars and nightclubs as well as counselling services in lesbian and gay centres of the bigger cities but it does not necessarily have a local reference like "the scene". It also implies any gay or lesbian activities or events. The gay and lesbian subculture developed because there wasn't much space or acceptance for gays and lesbians within heterosexual mainstream culture. As a result, gays and lesbians started to build up a community for themselves where they could live the way they wanted without being watched by others or judged for being different. It is still a very impressive experience for most gays and lesbians when they visit the community for the first time, since they can see homosexuality as the norm in this community.

Symbols, lesbian and gay There are several symbols, which refer to homosexuality or lesbian and gay life-styles: The two **entwined symbols** denoting the **male** or **female sex** referring to lesbian or gay preference:

The pink triangle is a reference to the many homosexuals deported and interned in concentration camps by the Nazis. Gay men were forced to wear an inverted pink triangle on their prison clothing to indicate the reason for their internment. In the 1970s gay activists resurrected this symbol because it drew attention to the ongoing discrimination and violence against homosexuals:

The Greek letter lambda was chosen in 1970 by the Gay Activists Alliance to serve as a symbol of gay liberation and was later adopted as an international symbol signifying lesbian and gay rights and protest against the mainstream culture:

Ever since the 1990s, the **rainbow flag** came into use worldwide, signifying the lesbian and gay community. The flag has six stripes and is a symbol of pride in the face of homophobic activities. The American artist Gilbert Baker created the rainbow flag in 1978 and since then it has become the best-known symbol for the gay and lesbian movement worldwide. The six colours from top to bottom symbolize certain aspects of life, which are red for life, orange for health, yellow for sun, green for harmony with Nature, blue for art, and purple for spirit.

There are also symbols used by lesbians only such as the **labrys** (double-headed axe), which refers to the weapons used by the mythical female Amazon warriors. The labrys is associated to the goddess Demeter and served as a ceremonial sceptre.

The **red ribbon** is a symbol of solidarity with people with HIV or AIDS; it also can signify that one remembers the men and women who died of AIDS. It is not a symbol of homosexuality itself. However, as in North America and Europe gay men are part of the groups that are often infected with HIV or died of AIDS it is a symbol that sometimes is held to be a symbol for the lesbian and gay community.
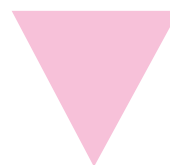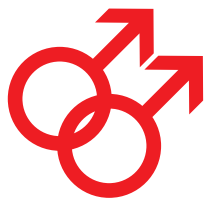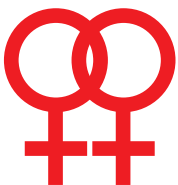
Tolerance In contrast to „acceptance" tolerance doesn't exactly mean to demonstratively advocate for and actively support minorities, marginal groups and non-conformists , but refers more to an inconspicuous attitude of laisser-faire towards them (from the Latin verb tolerare = bear, endure, suffer). Tolerance describes the tacit non-rejection of people who think, act, live differently and look different. In this regard tolerance is also the weaker and more passive term than acceptance. Tolerance is not necessarily respected and honoured by everyone. One cannot go to court because of intolerance and there are not necessarily sanctions for those who are intolerant. Tolerance only can be claimed to be followed by others on an abstract level and not on a concrete rule of behaviour. Therefore it is not possible to establish it as a compelling code of conduct. It also can be taken back without justification or other formal acts at any time.

Transgender(ed) A generic term for people whose gender identity and/ or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. For some transgendered people, the birth-assigned gender and the internal sense of gender identity do not match. Transgendered people can be female-to-male (FTM), or male-to-female (MTF), or may define themselves as something completely different than either one of these directions.

Transsexuality For a transsexual person the gender identity differs from his/ her biological sex. Transitioning and possible sex reassignment surgery can therefore be desired or already performed. Transexuality must be considered apart from sexual orientation: Transsexual people can be hetero-, bi- or homosexual.

Adresses

ILGA Europe – International Lesbian and Gay Association
avenue de Tervueren 94, B-1040 Brüssel, Belgium
Telephone +32/ 2 732 54 88, Fax +32/ 2 732 51 64
info@ilga-europe.org
www.ilga-europe.org

LesMigras – Lesbian Immigrant Women in Europe
www.lesmigras.de

Kenric
Lesbian social organisation
SAE to: BM Kenric WC1N 3XX
0115 9663638

Freedom Youth Network
for LGBT under 26
SAE: PO Box 393
Chatham ME4 5WD

Gay Teens Resources
Support for young people and their families and for those
unsure of their sexuality.
www.gayteens.org

The Queer Youth Alliance
National support and organisation for under 25s.
Email: info@queeryouth.org.uk
http://www.queeryouth.org.uk/

Focus World
A national organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and
transgender people.
sae to PO Box 393,
Chatham, Kent, ME4 5WD

Terrence Higgins Trust (THT)
Leading British charity for AIDS and HIV, established in 1982
and providing direct services to groups most affected by
HIV and AIDS, gay men and the UK African communities.
Email: info@tht.org.uk

Metrosexual Health
Extensive and practical information on sex and sexual health,
as well as information on booking an appointment for a
personal sexual health check-up and costs. Based in Harley
Street in London.
http://www.metrosexual.co.uk

Pink Therapy Services
Network for LGBT counsellors.
1 Harley St London W1G 9QD 020 7291 4480

Galop
Assistance to LGB in dealing with homophobic violence &
the Police
2G Leroy House 436 Essex Rd N1
3QP 020 7704 6767
Helpline 7704 2040

Gays And Lesbians Sharing Sobriety
for those living with drink problems
01142 880 350

Regard
National organisation of disabled lesbians, gay men and
bisexuals
BM Regard London WC1N 3XX
Email: regard@dircon.co.uk or regard@tinsleyviaduct.com

Gemma
Lesbian & bisexual women with/without disabilities
BM Box 5700 WC1N 3XX

Sola
For lesbians in abusive relationships
020 7328 7389
Email: solalondon@hotmail.com

The Samaritans
Registered charity based in the UK and Republic of Ireland
that provides confidential support to any person who is
suicidal or despairing and that increases public awareness of
issues around suicide and depression. Telephone and e-mail
addresses are on the front page of this site.
Email: jo@samaritans.org
http://www.samaritans.org.uk

Young Lesbian & Gay Christians
E-group and meetings, support, worship, friendship for under
30's
Email: ylgc_group@yahoo.co.uk

Quest GLB
Catholic group. Nationwide with local groups
BM BOX 2585 WC1N 3XX 020 7792 0234 24hr
ansaphone Email: quest@dircon.co.uk

Links

The editor cannot be held responsible for the contents of the web sites that are mentioned here, and cannot guarantee their accuracy, their completeness, and their availability. Only the providers of these web sites are responsible for the illegal, defective, or incomplete nature of their contents, especially for those remainders that result from the use or neglect of the information which is provided, as opposed to those which directly give access to a specific information.

www.comingoutstories.com

www.eurogayway.org
(European webpage for young gay men)

www.gayhistory.com

www.glbtq.com
(an encyclopaedia of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer culture)

http://glee.oulu.fi
(GLEE - European project where teachers can follow a seminary on homosexuality at school and exchange each other)

http://www.glsen.org/templates/index.html

www.hosilinz.at/summermeeting
(European youth summer camp at Attersee, Austria)

www.iglhrc.org
(International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commision)

http://www.ihlia.nl/
(international gay and lesbian archive and information centre)

http://www.lgbt-education.info
(beginning in summer 2005)

http://outcyclopedia.0catch.com/index.html

http://www.schools-out.org.uk/

www.stop-discrimination.info
(the European Commission's campaign against discrimination)

www2.hu-berlin.de/sexology
(Magnus-Hirschfeld-Archive for Sexology)

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http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=J367
http://www.jtsears.com/jglie

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Video

"The Celluloid Closet", documentary film about lesbians and gays in Hollywood films.