Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Services at Auraria

Tivoli Student Union 213
(303) 556-6333
BECAUSE

Gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people are discriminated against in housing and employment and because how they act is more important than who they are and if they get harassed it’s their problem and if they get attacked they provoked it and if they raise their voices they’re flaunting themselves and if they enjoy sex they’re perverts and if they get AIDS they deserve it and if they march with pride they’re recruiting children and if they stand up for their rights they’re overstepping their boundaries and because they’re forced to constantly question their worth as a human being and if they don’t have a relationship with someone of the opposite sex they haven’t given it a chance and if they have a relationship with someone of the same sex it is not recognized and they are told that their love is not “real” and if they come out of the closet they’re just going through a phase and because Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender history is virtually absent from literature and because homophobia is sanctioned by the government of the United States and... for lots of other reasons,

I AM PART OF THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER LIBERATION MOVEMENT.

Adapted by Jodi Berman
Imagine Statements

Try to imagine what it would be like to have the following experiences:

- Imagine sharing a home with your life partner and hiding that from your neighbors and even your family. When people ask about your living arrangement you respond with the term roommate or housemate out of fear of how they might respond.

- Imagine being invited home for a family event knowing that your siblings will be bringing their current romantic partners or spouses. You, however, cannot bring your partner even though your relationship is as central to your life as theirs for them.

- Imagine not being able to have a picture up at work of you and your partner when many of you co-workers have pictures up of themselves with their opposite sex partners.

- Imagine not being able to tell anyone about your relationship with your partner. In many ways you lead a double life and you and your partner are isolated in most work and social situations.

- Imagine not being able to take time off from your job to take care of your very sick partner without lying about why you need the time off.

- Imagine feeling like the only time you can be affectionate with the person you love is when you are in your own home or the homes of a few close friends.

- Imagine being with people to whom you are not out and having to change pronouns when talking about your activities and your life.

- Imagine worrying that your children will be harassed at school because of your love for your partner.

- Imagine hiding your sexual orientation because you are afraid of losing custody of your children.

- Imagine not having your relationship validated by society—no one thinks of you as a real couple or your family as a real family.

- Imagine not having community resources available to assist you with your needs because institutions assume everyone is heterosexual – and you don’t dare let on that you’re not.

- Imagine filling out forms that ask you to mark “married” or “single” - when neither of those is true.

Adapted from GLBT Student Services at Colorado State University.
LGBTQI Terminology

A note about these definitions: Each of these definitions has been carefully researched and closely analyzed from theoretical and practical perspectives for cultural sensitivity, common usage, and general appropriateness. We have done our best to represent the most popular uses of the terms listed; however there may be some variation in definitions depending on location. Please note that each person who uses any or all of these terms does so in a unique way (especially terms that is used in the context of an identity label). If you do not understand the context in which a person is using one of these terms, it is always appropriate to ask. This is especially recommended when using terms that we have noted that can have a derogatory connotation.

**Agendered** – Person is internally ungendered.

**Ally** – Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and genderstraight privilege in themselves and others; a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.

**Androgyne** – Person appearing and/or identifying as neither man nor woman, presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.

**Asexual** – Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.

**Bicurious** – A curiosity about having sexual relations with a same gender/sex person.

**Bigendered** - A person whose gender identity is a combination of male/man and female/woman.

**Binding** – The process of flattening one’s breasts to have a more masculine or flat appearing chest.

**Biphobia** - The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQI community, as well as in general society.

**Bisexual** – A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.

**Coming Out** – May refer to the process by which one accepts one’s own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersexed person (to “come out” to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one’s sexuality, gender identity, or intersexed status with others (to “come out” to friends, etc.). This can be a continual, life-long process for homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, and intersexed individuals.

**Cross-dresser** – Someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex.

**Discrimination** – Prejudice + power. It occurs when members of a more powerful social group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful social group. Discrimination can take many forms, including both individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges normally accorded to other groups. Ongoing discrimination creates a climate of oppression for the affected group.

**Drag** - The performance of one or multiple genders theatrically.

**Drag King** – A person who performs masculinity theatrically.

**Drag Queen** – A person who performs femininity theatrically.

**Dyke** – Derogatory term referring to a masculine lesbian. Sometimes adopted affirmatively by lesbians (not necessarily masculine ones) to refer to themselves.

**Femme** – Feminine identified person of any gender/sex.
FTM / F2M - Abbreviation for female-to-male transgender or transsexual person.

Gay – 1. Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in “homosexual behavior” identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution. 2. Term used to refer to the LGBTQI community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

Gender Binary – The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

Gender Cues – What human beings use to attempt to tell the gender/sex of another person. Examples include hairstyle, gait, vocal inflection, body shape, facial hair, etc. Cues vary by culture.

Gender Identity – A person’s sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.

Gender Normative – A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society.

Gender Variant – A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, crossdresser, etc.).

Genderfuck – The idea of playing with ‘gender cues’ to purposely confuse “standard” or stereotypical gender expressions, usually through clothing.

Genderqueer – A gender variant person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. Often includes a political agenda to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system.

Hermaphrodite—An out-of-date and offensive term for an intersexed person, very offensive.

Hetero-normativity—The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.

Heterosexism – Prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice – backed by institutional power – that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

Heterosexual Privilege – Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to homosexuals and bisexuals. Also, the benefits homosexuals and bisexuals receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual or bisexual identity.

HIV-phobia – The irrational fear or hatred of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Homophobia – The irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals, homosexuality, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid sex role stereotypes. It is this fear that enforces sexism as well as heterosexism.

Homosexual – A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex.

In the Closet – Refers to a homosexual, bisexual, transperson or intersex person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. An intersex person may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to “correct,” whenever possible, intersex conditions early in childhood and to hide the medical history from the patient. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet”; for example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work, or with their family. Also known as

Institutional Oppression – Arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc.
Internalized Oppression – The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersexed Person—Someone whose sex a doctor has a difficult time categorizing as either male or female. A person whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, gonads, and/or genitals differs from one of the two expected patterns.

Lesbian – Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people. The term lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos and as such is sometimes considered a Eurocentric category that does not necessarily represent the identities of African-Americans and other non-European ethnic groups. This being said, individual female-identified people from diverse ethnic groups, including African-Americans, embrace the term ‘lesbian’ as an identity label.

LGBTQI – A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersexed community.

MTF / M2F – Abbreviation for male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.

Oppression – The systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Outing – Involuntary disclosure of one’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

Pansexual – A person who is sexually attracted to all or many gender expressions.

Passing – Describes a person’s ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or race/ethnic identity or to be seen as heterosexual.

Prejudice – A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members.

Queer – 1. An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively- heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Queer includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transpeople, intersex persons, the radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive (underworld) explorers. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label instead of ‘bisexual’ as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to, or as a way of stating a non-heterosexual orientation without having to state who they are attracted to. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been semantically overturned by members of the maligned group, who use it as a term of defiant pride. ‘Queer’ is an example of a word undergoing this process. For decades ‘queer’ was used solely as a derogatory adjective for gays and lesbians, but in the 1980s the term began to be used by gay and lesbian activists as a term of self-identification. Eventually, it came to be used as an umbrella term that included gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘queer’ to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexuals is often considered offensive. Similarly, other reclaimed words are usually offensive to the in-group when used by outsiders, so extreme caution must be taken concerning their use when one is not a member of the group.

Sex - A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Because usually subdivided into ‘male’ and ‘female’, this category does not recognize the existence of intersexed bodies.

Sex Identity – How a person identifies physically: female, male, in between, beyond, or neither.
**Sexual Orientation** – The desire for intimate emotional and/or sexual relationships with people of the same gender/sex, another gender/sex, or multiple genders/sexes.

**Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS)** – A term used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person’s “sex”. In most states, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance.

**Sexuality** – A person’s exploration of sexual acts, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, and desire.

**Transhate** – The irrational hatred of those who are gender variant, usually expressed through violent and often deadly means.

**Transition** – This term is primarily used to refer to the process a gender variant person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.

**Transphobia** – The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.

**Transsexual** – A person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

**Two-Spirited** – Native persons who have attributes of both genders, have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes, and are often involved with mystical rituals (shamans). Their dress is usually mixture of male and female articles and they are seen as a separate or third gender. The term ‘two-spirit’ is usually considered to specific to the Zuni tribe. Similar identity labels vary by tribe and include ‘one-spirit’ and ‘wintke’.

**Ze / Hir** – Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some gender variant persons. Pronounced /zee/ and /here/, / they replace “he”/“she” and “his”/“hers” respectively.

This terminology sheet was created by Eli R. Green (eli@trans-academics.org) and Eric N. Peterson at the LGBT Resource Center at UC Riverside “2003-2004, with many kind people who helped use create and revise these definitions. This sheet is always a work in progress so please be sure to check the Instructional Materials section of Trans-Academics.org for updated versions. Please feel free to alter, use or pass on as needed but be sure to give credit to the original creators. Any updates or corrections can be submitted to eli@trans-academics.org. Thank you.
Homophobia

In the clinical sense, homophobia is defined as an intense, irrational fear of same sex relationships that become overwhelming to the person. In common usage, homophobia is the fear of intimate relationships with persons of the same sex.

Below are listed four homophobic and four positive levels of attitudes toward GLBT people. They were developed by Dr. Dorothy Riddle, a psychologist from Tucson, Arizona.

**Homophobic Levels of Attitudes**

**Repulsion:** Homosexuality is seen as a “crime against nature”. Gays are sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc. and anything is justified to change them (e.g., prison, hospitalization, negative behavior therapy including electric shock).

**Pity:** Heterosexual chauvinism. Heterosexuality is more mature and certainly to be preferred. Any possibility of becoming straight should be reinforced and those who seem to be born “that way” should be pitied, “the poor dears”.

**Tolerance:** Homosexuality is just a phase of development that many people go through and most people “grow out of”. Thus, gays are less mature than straights and should be treated with protectiveness and indulgence one uses with a child. GLBT people should not be given positions of authority (because they haven’t yet fully matured).

**Acceptance:** Still implies there is something to accept, characterized by such statements as “you’re not a gay to me, you’re a person”. “What you do in bed is your own business”, “That’s fine as long as you don’t flaunt it”.

- Denies social and legal realities. 84% of people believe being gay is obscene and vulgar and 70% still believe it is wrong even between consenting adults.
- Ignores the pain of invisibility and stress of closet behavior. “Flaunt” usually means say or do anything that makes other people aware—it also usually refers to behaviors that heterosexual people do without facing criticism.

**Positive Levels of Attitude**

**Support:** Basic ACLU approach. Work to safeguard the rights of GLBT people. Such people may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the climate and the irrational unfairness.

**Admiration:** Acknowledges that being GLBT in our society takes strength. Such people are willing to truly look at themselves and work on their own homophobic attitudes.

**Appreciation:** Value the diversity of people and see GLBT people as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia in themselves and in others.

**Nurturance:** Assume that GLBT people, like other groups, are indispensable in our society. View GLBT people with genuine affection and delight and are willing to be allies and advocates.
What is Homophobia?

Homophobia takes many different forms. Sometimes it takes the form of physical acts of hate violence, verbal assault or vandalism or blatant discrimination such as firing an employee, evicting someone from their housing or denying them access to public accommodations. There are many other kinds of homophobia and heterosexism that happen every day. We often overlook these more subtle actions and exclusions because they seem so insignificant by comparison. They are not.

- Look at a lesbian or gay man and automatically thinking of their sexuality rather than seeing a whole, complex person.
- Failing to be supportive when your GLBT friend is upset about a quarrel or breakup.
- Changing your seat in a meeting because a lesbian sat in the chair next to yours.
- Thinking you can “spot one”.
- Using the terms ‘lesbian’ or ‘gay’ as accusatory.
- Not asking about “partners” or “lovers” although you regularly ask “How is your Husband/Wife?” when you run into a heterosexual friend.
- Thinking that a lesbian (if you are female) or gay man (if you are male) is making sexual advances if they touch you.
- Feeling repulsed by public displays of affection between lesbians or gay men but accepting the same affectional displays between heterosexuals.
- Feeling that GLBT people are too outspoken about their civil rights.
- Feeling that discussions about homophobia are not necessary, because you are ‘ok’ on these issues.
- Assuming that everyone you meet is heterosexual.
- Being outspoken about GLBT rights but making sure everyone knows that you are straight.
- Feeling that a lesbian is just a woman who couldn’t find a man or that a lesbian is a woman who wants to be a man.
- Feeling that a gay man is just a man who couldn’t find a woman or that a gay man is a man who wants to be a woman.
- Feeling that bisexual people are just confused.
- Not confronting a homophobic remark for fear of being identified with lesbians and gays.
- Worrying about the effect a GLBT co-worker will have on your work or your clients.
- Asking your GLBT colleagues to speak only about GLBT issues but not about other issues about which they may be knowledgeable.
- Focusing exclusively on someone’s sexual orientation and not on other issues of concern.
- Being afraid to ask questions about GLBT issues when you don’t know the answers.
What is Transphobia?

A fear or hatred of individuals who express gender differently from cultural stereotypes or cultural norms. A fear or hatred of changing gender characteristics.

- Expecting a transgender to change their public identity, affectional habits or mode of dress.
- Changing your seat in a meeting because a transgender person sits in the chair next to yours.
- Using the wrong pronoun when addressing a transgender person.
- Asking a transgender person their former name.
- Thinking you can “spot one”.
- Using the term “fag” when addressing a transgender person.
- Thinking all transgender people’s sexual orientation is “heterosexual”.
- Kissing an old friend but being afraid to shake hands with a transgender person.
- Thinking that transgender people are too outspoken about transgender rights.
- Thinking that a transgender woman is just a man.
- Thinking that all transgender persons want sex/gender reassignment.
- Thinking that a transgender man is just a “butch lesbian”.
- Thinking that a transgender person is primarily a homosexual and that this so unacceptable to their egos that they cannot bear their gender or sexual orientation.
- Thinking that transgender person’s parents were overbearing, absent, or not good role models.
- Assuming that genital or hormonal procedures changes sex or gender.
- Calling a transgender a “change”.
- Contrasting transgender men/women with "real" men/women (as if transgender men/women were not real).
- Requiring “medical letters” before allowing us to present in public in our preferred gender.
- Thinking that transgender persons mutilate their bodies by having surgical procedures performed.
- Asking transgender persons if they are worried about being attacked.
Heterosexual Privilege Is...

...living without ever having to think twice, about, face, confront, engage, or cope with anything on this page.

- Marriage, which includes over 1000 federal and hundreds of state granted rights, responsibilities, and privileges which include:
  - Public recognition and support for an intimate relationship
  - Paid leave from employment and condolences when grieving the death of your partner/lover
  - Inheriting from your partner/lover/companion automatically under law
  - Sharing health, auto, and homeowners’ insurance policies at reduced rates
  - Immediate access to your loved ones in cases of accident or emergency
  - Family-of-origin support for a life partner/lover/companion
  - Increased possibilities for getting a job, receiving on the job training and promotion

- Kissing, hugging, or being affectionate in public without threat of punishment.

- Talking about your relationship or what projects, vacations, family planning you and your partner/lover are creating.

- Not questioning your normalcy, either sexually or culturally.

- Expressing pain when a relationship ends and having other people notice and attend to your pain.

- Being employed as a teacher at any level and in any community without fear of being fired because you are assumed to corrupt children.

- Raising children without threats of state intervention or having to be worried which of their friends might reject them because of their parents’ sexuality.

- Dating the person of your desire in your teen years.

- Living openly with your partner.

- Receiving validation from your religious community.

- Receiving social acceptance from neighbors, colleagues, new friends.

- Not having to hide and lie about same-sex only social activities.

- Living your life without being identified by your sexual orientation.

- Not constantly wondering if this is a safe place to be out.
Heterosexual Questionnaire

1) What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2) When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3) Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4) Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5) Isn’t it possible that all you need is a good Gay lover?
6) Heterosexuals have histories of failures in Gay relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of rejection?
7) If you’ve never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn’t prefer that?
8) If heterosexuality is normal, why are a disproportionate number of mental patients heterosexual?
9) To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
10) Your heterosexuality doesn’t offend me as long as you don’t try to force it on me. Why do you people feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual orientation?
11) If you choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?
12) The great majority of child molesters are heterosexual. Do you really consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?
13) Why do you insist on being so obvious, and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can’t you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
14) How can you ever hope to become a whole person if you limit yourself to a compulsive, exclusive heterosexual object choice and remain unwilling to explore and develop your normal, natural, healthy, God-given homosexual potential?
15) Heterosexuals are noted for assigning themselves and each other to narrowly restricted stereotyped sex-roles. Why do you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
16) Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
17) With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
18) How could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual, considering the menace of overpopulation?
19) There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed with which you might be able to change if you really want to. Have you considered aversion therapy?
20) Do heterosexuals hate and/or distrust others of their own sex? Is that what makes them heterosexual?
What do I do if someone comes out to me?

1. Listen. Coming out takes a lot of courage and may be the culmination of months or years of personally coming to terms with ones sexuality. The LGBTIQ person shares this information with a keen understanding of the risks involved. It may also be the case that this person simply wants to include you in their life and share something personal about themselves.

2. Remain neutral and non-judgmental. This is especially important when dealing with people who are just coming out. There is no way for the LGBTIQ person to predict your reaction accurately. You have spent your entire life in a society that teaches you to despise LGBTIQ people. They’ve come to you because they trust you! The things you say or do can have a very strong impact on this person. This exchange of intimate information should not be seen as an opportunity for you to advance a particular way of life or discuss the moral ramifications of homosexuality.

3. Ask sensitive questions and be willing to learn. Avoid asking questions that imply that there is something wrong with being LGBTIQ (e.g., “What do you think caused your homosexuality? How can you live a normal life?). Also, avoid asking questions that would have been considered rude within the relationship before this disclosure; this person has the same sensibilities as before. Some good questions to ask are:
   a. What did you want to talk to me about?
   b. Can you tell me more about that?
   c. What has your coming out process been like for you?
   d. Have you shared this with anyone else? How did they react?
   e. What do you need right now?
   f. How can I help?

4. Be supportive. Let them know that you are there to talk with, or just someone who will listen. For people just coming out, they may not be aware of resources available to them, or they may not feel comfortable approaching other people about the subject. You don’t need to be an expert on the subject to be supportive, just remember to be open-minded!

5. Help the person recognize his or her own self-oppressive beliefs. (e.g. “I’ll never be able to have kids.”)

6. Don’t ignore it. When a person chooses to come out to you, it may be because they are tired of living in secrecy. Being gay and not being afraid to tell anyone can be frustrating. Make an effort to take an interest in this part of their life.

7. Don’t make their sexuality the extent of your interactions. While it is important to acknowledge and validate a person’s sexual orientation, it is not necessary to let this topic dominate your interactions. It is important to remember that the LGBTIQ person has not changed. You may be shocked by their revelation, but remember that this is still the same person as before.
8. **Be honest and open.** It’s okay to admit that you don’t know everything, or even anything. It’s also okay to admit feeling uncomfortable with this subject. Be honest though! Your own discomfort with the subject may come across as discomfort with the person or their sexuality. If someone who has come out to you wants detailed information or is in need of more in-depth counseling, it is perfectly acceptable to suggest that they speak with someone more educated on the subject.

**Supportive Do’s**
- **Do** respect the person’s right to privacy and confidentiality. They came out to you and will come out to others in their own right time.
- **Do** give the same sincere acceptance and encouragement to the person that you might want when you tell a friend something special about yourself.
- **Do** validate the person’s concerns about approaching other friends/family/employers. Help him/her work through the concerns by listening to his/her story and perspective.
- **Do** give yourself credit for being a person who someone ‘came out’ to voluntarily. The person made a courageous decision to be open and honest about something about him/herself that is discouraged by many in society. Feel honored that you were chosen.

**Important Don’ts**
- **Don’t** rush the process of trying to understand this person’s sexuality or gender identity.
- **Don’t** assume that this person should see a professional counselor.
- **Don’t** mistake when someone is “coming out” to you that they are also “coming on” to you.
- **Don’t** assume that everything is “okay” now that the individual has “come out” to you. The person may still experience confusion, loneliness, anger and will need to be validated for where he/she is at any given time.

Adapted from the University of Denver Safe Zone