



**Abertay
University**

Student Services

Wondering About Your Sexuality?

Some information and sources of help

at Abertay University

from LGBT group, Students Association

and Counselling Service





Pride march,
Edinburgh

Being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or just not sure can be difficult in a hetero-normative society. You may not have had many opportunities to think what it means for YOU to be LGB or to talk with others in a supportive environment about how you feel about this.

It's not just about 'coming out' – it's also about – 'what then?' Relationships, self-esteem, and assertiveness: these are all typical kinds of issues we all have to deal with, however they can be made more complicated by being LGB.

We want you to know that you are not alone during this time. There are resources available in the form of other students, student services and your union. Mostly, it is important for you to know that it is okay to be gay!

".. love me not in spite
of my difference, but
because of it"

- Lana Wachowski



17th of May - International Day
Against Homophobia and Transphobia

"Be proud of who you are, this is
a good time that we live in. We
are being granted more and
more rights... and thats
AWESOME!"

Neil Patrick Harris' quote to
LGBT Youth



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"I've never really addressed
those rumours before because I
figured why defend yourself
against something that is not
offensive"

- Johnny Galecki, on gay
rumours



17th of May - International Day
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"love is a human
experience, not a
political statement"

- Anne Hathaway



17th of May - International Day
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Worth Thinking About

Coming Out

The process of telling others about your sexuality (also known as 'sexual orientation') is often referred to as 'coming out'. Coming out is not necessarily a one-off event - lesbians, gays and bisexual people may have to come out many times during their lives.

There is no one prescribed way to come out as lesbian, gay or bisexual. It is a very personal process, YOUR process and the most important part of this is coming to terms with who you are and how you feel. Some people never feel fully ready to come out, while others are ready to accept their orientation very quickly. Others may feel comfortable being open about their sexuality with some people, but not with others.

However the important thing to remember is to do what feels right to you! Coming out to certain people, such as family, friends or colleagues may be difficult and takes courage, it may help you to talk to someone who has gone through the process. They may have useful insights for you, or be able to put your mind at ease about what it really means to be LGBT in today's society.

Support with Coming Out

The www.rucomingout website has an archive of coming out stories from people of all ages and backgrounds, as well as tips about coming out and interviews with inspiring lesbian, gay and bisexual people. If you are considering coming out, it might be helpful to look at the website to read about how other people came out.

Worth Thinking About

Why come out?

Whether you've come to terms with your sexuality or you're still thinking about it, it can be difficult dealing with that on your own. You may get to a point where you need to talk about it with someone, to get support or simply get it off your chest.

Don't feel under pressure to come out - take your time. Only you will know when you feel comfortable and ready to do it.

You may be surprised by how positive the experience of coming out can be. Very few people regret coming out, even if it is difficult at the time. Often, they feel a weight has been removed- even if they are only "out" to certain people. The strain of being "in the closet" is highly stressful to many people and can cause them to withdraw both socially and emotionally from friends and family- leaving them feeling alone and isolated with their fears.

If you decide to come out, but are unsure how others might react, you could consider making contact with a support group first. There are helplines, community groups and agencies that are there to support and advise you. See below for more details. It could also be good to start by telling one or two trusted friends first, before coming out to other people.

If you do come out, but get a negative reaction, don't despair. Talk to someone for more support! Abertay and Dundee have a thriving LGBT community and you may be surprised just how many of your course-mates or friends are going through the same process as you. Try reaching out, it is very likely that there is at least one other LGBT person close to you.

Difficulties with being LGBT

Not everything is easy once you have come out. There are some people who believe that your sexual orientation is their business, or worse yet, is wrong. Sometimes this comes from having been brought up with certain beliefs. Other times, they are simply ignorant to what it means to be anything other than heterosexual. Some of these people simply need to be educated, talked to and given the opportunity to understand. However others will take a more aggressive stance and may make you feel threatened or simply ashamed through the use of slurs and sometimes threats.

This behaviour is known as homophobia. However it is **WRONG** and you should be aware of this. If you are faced with homophobia or homophobic comments, report it. Often these are lone individuals who will be deterred by lack of support from others.

If you encounter this behaviour in the early stages of questioning your orientation or coming out, it is important to know that no, they can not "tell" you are LGBT. Gay slurs are wrongly and commonly thrown around, often by ourselves or our friends. "that's so gay" is an everyday saying, however this does not mean that everyone is homophobic or that coming out to a friend who has used this term will end badly. Most people are very supportive or simply accept gay people as part of society. The downside is that yes, some homophobic people do still exist and this cannot be ignored!

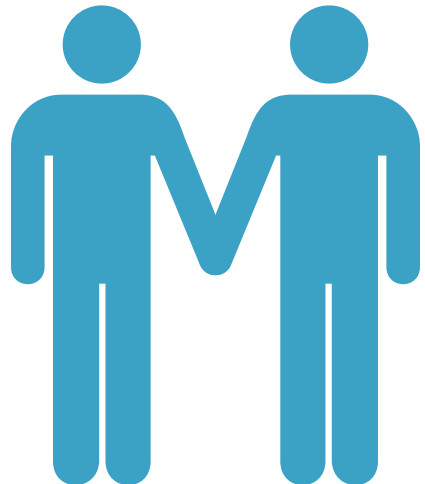
What is homophobia?

Homophobia is the irrational hatred, intolerance, and fear of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people.

LGB people brought up in a homophobic society can often internalise these negative stereotypes and develop varying degrees of low self-esteem and self-hatred, often described as 'internalised homophobia'.

Stonewall's The School Report 2012 asked young people about their experiences at school and their current mental health. It found that more than half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people experience homophobic bullying in Britain's schools.

This kind of bullying often lowers self esteem and can increase the risk of depression and self harming. Remember, this bullying is not your fault and should not be tolerated. If you encounter it, do not feel ashamed or as if you have done something wrong by simply being yourself, report it!



Mental health

There is evidence that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are more likely to have experienced depression or anxiety, or had suicidal thoughts, than men and women in general. For young lesbian, gay and bisexual people who have experienced homophobic bullying, levels of suicidal thoughts and depression are far higher than amongst those who have not been bullied. This is not something we condone. And not something you have to suffer through alone.



Need some more support?

Listed on the following pages are a number of resources you may find useful or gain support from. However you should also be aware of our on-campus help services.

The public page for Abertay's LGBT society- for meeting others who are LGBT or simply questioning their orientation, can be accessed here: <https://www.facebook.com/abertaylgbt?ref=hl> with the option to join the secure members page for additional support.

The peer-to peer (P2P) scheme offered by the university for those students who may need additional support in general.

The LGBT society's befriending scheme which matches you with a student mentor to talk through any concerns you may have one-on-one, introduce you to others within the society or around campus and (if interested) help integrate you into the 'gay scene'.

Abertay also has a number of openly LGB lecturers if you feel you need more senior advice.

The Counselling Service operates all year for those who are having trouble coming to terms with their sexuality or experiencing depression or anxiety over what it may all mean. Also of course LGB students face many of the challenges that all students can experience, you will find that the counsellors will help with whatever your concerns are.

Angus LGBT for Equality and Diversity

Angus LGBT for Equality and Diversity (ALED) is a new group which is for the LGBT community of Angus. We also extend a warm welcome to friends and family of the LGBT community, everyone will be made to feel welcome.

Postal address:

c/o 13 Park View Brechin,
DD9 7AT Angus Scotland

Telephone: 01356 629366

Helpline: 07719052195

Email: aledlgbt@hotmail.co.uk

Web: www.aledlgbt.webs.com

Opening hours: 10am - 11:00pm

Glasgow Women's Library

Library service specifically for women, offering a range of reading materials, including the Lesbian Archive.

Postal address:

15 Berkeley Street,
Glasgow, G3 7BW

Telephone: 0141 552 8345

Email: info@womenslibrary.org.uk

Web: www.womenslibrary.org.uk

Opening hours: Mon - Fri 10am - 4.30pm

BiScotland

Support and social network for people who are bisexual or questioning their sexuality. BiScotland holds monthly meetings and social events in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Telephone: 0796 396 0321

Email: info@biscotland.org

Web: www.biscotland.org

Stonewall

Working for equality and justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

Web: www.stonewall.org.uk

Equality Network Scotland

The Equality Network campaigns in Scotland for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. They seek to work at national level, with the Scottish parliament and national bodies, but they also work with local LGBT communities and individuals.

Postal address:

30 Bernard Street,
Edinburgh, EH6 6PR

Telephone: 07020 933 952

Email: en@equality-network.org

Web: www.equality-network.org

Gay Men's Health

Gay Men's Health is a charity that involves and empowers gay and bisexual men to promote the health and well-being of all men who have sex with men. They have offices in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Postal address:

10 Union Street,
Edinburgh, EH1 3LU

Telephone: 0131 558 9444

Web: www.gmh.org.uk

Gay Outdoor Club

GOC consists of about 40 groups, which are either geographically based or specialise in a type of activity (e.g. climbing), and all events are organised through one of those groups. Please visit their website for more information and event schedule.

Postal address:

BM GOC,
London, WC1N 3XX

Telephone: 08448 700462

Email: info@goc.org.uk

Web: www.goc.org.uk



Abertay LGBT exists to support LGBT students, their friends and family, and supporters at Abertay University. The Society organises events throughout the year for all its members.

UADSA

Abertay Student Centre

1-3 Bell Street
Dundee
DD1 1HP

www.uadsa.com



UADSA



@UADSA

Abertay Counselling Service

The Counselling Service is part of Student Services situated on Level 2 of the Library, and an appointment can be made either by speaking to one of the reception staff in Student Services or by phoning (01382) 308051. Alternatively you can email: counselling@abertay.ac.uk Appointments are scheduled between 9am and 4pm.