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## The Development of Sexual Orientation: A Teaching Resource

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### Overview

I designed this resource to help teachers plan and teach a class on the development of sexual orientation. The seven teaching modules begin with an introduction to the topic and a review of the resources found within it. Books (**BK**) and articles (**JN**) can be used to write lectures and structure class discussions, so next I review a number of both, pointing out important elements along the way. Films are excellent vehicles for learning, so I follow with a review of pertinent documentaries and feature films. I highlight particular scenes or “teaching topics” that will be helpful in getting across important facts, ideas, concepts, and theories. Web sites (**WEB**) often provide personal insights that are different from the academic assessment of a topic. Thus, each module ends with a review of some significant web sites along with their addresses or links. Teachers interested in sexual orientation will find this to be an invaluable resource. Two general resources of use are a glossary of Lesbian Bisexual Gay Transgender (LBGT) Terms, at <http://www.asu.edu/safezone/pdfs/glossary.pdf> and the Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Culture, from <http://www.glbtc.com/>

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## MODULE 1: ORIGINS

### Introduction

JN = Journal, BK = Book, & WEB = Web site

Conservative estimates are that 10% of humans are exclusively homosexual. A number of different theories propose the cause of homosexuality. First is the psychodynamic explanation. Freud believed that environment was key. Boys with dominating mothers and distant fathers incorrectly identified with their mothers and therefore were attracted to men (Mitchell, 2002, JN). Reparative therapists (NARTH, n.d., WEB; Nicolosi, 1991, BK) and some religious organizations (Religious Tolerance, n.d., WEB) subscribe to this psychodynamic theory. No empirical evidence, however, supports the case (Bailey, 2003, BK). Another environmental theory, that childhood sexual abuse leads to homosexuality, does have supporting evidence (Cameron & Cameron, 1995, JN; Doll, Joy, Bartholow, & Harrison, 1992; JN)

Green (1987, BK) studied a group of gender-typical boys and a group of very effeminate boys over the course of 15 years. The majority of the effeminate boys grew up to identify as gay but the same was not true for the typical boys. Green called this “The Sissy Boy Syndrome.” Similarly, Bailey (2003, BK) found that people are able to identify someone as gay by listening to speech samples or by watching him walk. Bem (in Bancroft, 2000, BK) postulated that the predisposition to display gender-atypical behavior may be a link to understanding homosexuality. However, not all gay men are effeminate, so the gender-atypical theory explains the origin of homosexuality in only a subset of gay men (Green, 1987, BK).

Most researchers agree that biology plays a role in the development of homosexuality. The existence of homosexuality in over 450 species is taken as evidence that homosexuality is biologically based (Bagemihl, 1999, BK), as the documentary The Truth about Gay Animals illustrates (Minhas, 2002). Differences between the brains of homosexuals and heterosexuals (LeVay, 1991, JN; LeVay, 1994, BK) and differences in prenatal hormone exposure (Banks & Gartrell, in De Cecco & Parker, 1995, BK; Williams et al., 2000, JN) have been documented. Another link between biology and homosexuality is the older brother effect. Homosexual men have a greater number of older brothers than controls (Blanchard & Bogaert, 1996, JN; Bogaert, 2002, JN). A maternal immunological response to male tissue from previous pregnancies may be responsible for the effect. The documentary Middle Sexes: Redefining He and She (Thomas, 2005) contains an excellent discussion of the older brother effect.

The most promising biological evidence is genetic. For example, homosexuality appears to run in families (Bailey & Benishay, 1993, JN) and a twin study demonstrated higher concordance rates for homosexuality in identical twins than non-identical twins (Bailey & Pillard, 1991, JN). Hamer and Copeland (1995, BK) found a strong link between familial homosexuality and particular DNA markers on the X chromosome known as Xq28. Evidence for the biological basis of homosexuality has met with much resistance (Born Gay ProCon, n.d., WEB; NARTH, n.d., WEB) and ignited an on-going controversy among genetic researchers, the religious right, gay activists, and journalists (Hamer & Copeland, 1995, BK).

## Books

Bagemihl, B. (1999). Biological exuberance: Animal homosexuality and natural diversity. New York: St Martin Press.

Bagemihl documents the existence of homosexual behavior in over 450 species illustrating that homosexual behavior is not exclusively human. He argues that animal homosexuality is not an aberration or a form of aggression (as many biologists contend) but a normal sexual behavior that may have evolved simply because it is pleasurable. The take home message is that homosexuality may have evolved in humans for this same reason.

Bailey, J. M. (2003). The man who would be queen: The science of gender-bending and transsexualism. Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press.

Bailey is a psychologist at Northwestern University whose book explores the origins of homosexuality and transsexuality. One of his major tenets is that both proclivities have a strong biological basis. Many of his writings have caused controversy, and he has been accused to unprofessional conduct.

“Chapter 4: Gay Femininity”

Bailey’s research on gay voice and movement patterns are discussed in this chapter. He finds that gays and straights move and talk differently, and these differences can be easily detected. He suggests this is evidence of a biological basis of sexual orientation.

Bancroft, J. (Ed.). (2000). The role of theory in sex research. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

This book is a collection of essays on sexuality across the lifespan. Part 2 is on sexual orientation. Below is a summary of Daryl Bem’s theory on the etiology of homosexuality.

“The Exotic-Becomes-Erotic,” by Daryl Bem

Bem proposes that the biological cause of homosexuality may be only an indirect one. Most children display gender-typical traits and therefore feel different from the other sex (or in Bem’s words, the opposite sex is seen as “exotic”). Exposure to the exotic leads to physiological stimulation, and the opposite gender now becomes erotic. Following this line of thought, children who inherit the predisposition to display gender-atypical characteristics do not feel different from the opposite sex. Thus, the same sex is seen as exotic and therefore as erotic.

De Cecco, J. P., & Parker, D. A. (Eds.). (1995). Sex, cells, and same-sex desire: The biology of sexual preference. London: Haworth Press.

This book provides an exhaustive discussion of the biological basis of homosexuality. Noted experts theorize about the emergence of sexual preference. What is unique to this book is the inclusion of several critiques of these theories. The last section discusses the potential misuses of research on the biological basis of sexual orientation.

Green, R. (1987). The "sissy boy syndrome" and the development of homosexuality. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Green was a UCLA psychiatrist who headed a treatment clinic for children with gender-identity disorders. As part of his research, he followed two groups of boys, one “feminine” and the other “masculine” in attitude and behavior for 15 years. He found that in the first group a majority of the boys identified themselves as homosexual whereas only one of the second group did the same. Green concluded that sissy-boy gays are one of many types of homosexual people.

Hamer, D., & Copeland, P. (1995). The science of desire: The search for the gay gene and the biology of behavior. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Hamer discovered that genes play an important role in determining homosexuality. His research is very complicated, but this excellent book explains the science in clear language.

Hamer and his colleagues studied the extended families of 114 gay men. They found high rates of same-sex orientation in maternal uncles and male cousins but not in fathers or paternal relatives, indicating an X-linked inheritance of homosexual behavior. In 40 families, two gay brothers shared a genetic X-linked marker known as Xq28. This finding was so strong that the investigators concluded with a 99% certainty that at least one subgroup of homosexuality was genetically based.

Another fascinating portion of this book is a description of the controversy that this study ignited in the world of genetic researchers, the religious right, gay activists, and journalists. The volume also refers its readers to a wealth of related resources.

LeVay, S. (1994). The sexual brain. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

LeVay looks at the biological foundation of human sexual desire and behavior. Topics include sexual development, brain organization, courtship behavior, gender differences, homosexuality, and transsexuality.

“Chapter 12: So Full of Shapes Is Fancy: Sexual Orientation and Its Development”

LeVay considers how genes, hormones, and prenatal brain development may help account for why some people become homosexual whereas others become heterosexual. LeVay gives particular attention to his own research on sexual orientation and brain differences. He found that the INAH (a small set of cells in the hypothalamus known to regulate male sexual behavior) was smaller in gay men than in straight men.

Nicolosi, J. (1991). Reparative therapy of male homosexuality: A new clinical approach. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.

Nicolosi outlines the basic tenets of his form of reparative therapy in this book. I recommend Chapters 4-6 as they clearly explain his psychoanalytic ideas on the importance of father-son relationships and sexual orientation.

## Articles

Bailey, J. M., & Benishay, D. S. (1993). Familial aggregation of female sexual orientation. American Journal of Psychiatry, 150, 272-277.

Heterosexual and homosexual individuals reported on the sexual orientation of their siblings. Researchers then contacted and interviewed the siblings. Homosexual women had a significantly higher percentage of sisters who were lesbians. Gay men had a higher percentage of homosexual brothers but the difference was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that homosexuality has a genetic component for women.

Bailey, J. M., & Pillard, R. C. (1991). A genetic study of male sexual orientation. Archives of General Psychiatry, 48, 1089-1096.

Bailey and Pillard studied pairs of brothers and determined who was homosexual and who was not. The concordance rate for homosexuality was 52% for identical twins, 22% for the fraternal twins, 9.2% for biologically related brothers, and 11% for adopted brothers. Critics of the genetic theory suggest these data are lack of proof because the concordance rate is not 100%. This criticism is invalid because researchers never claimed that homosexuality is 100% genetic.

Blanchard, R., & Bogaert, A. F. (1996). Homosexuality in men and number of older brothers. American Journal of Psychiatry, 153, 27-31.

Blanchard and Bogaert were the first to demonstrate the older brother effect. Men with older brothers were significantly more apt to be homosexual and each additional brother increased their chances of being homosexual by 33%. The authors speculate that this may occur because of a maternal immune response to preexisting male tissue. However, many critics view this study as methodologically flawed.

Bogaert, A. F. (2002). Recent research on sexual orientation and fraternal birth order. Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, 11, 101-107

Results showed that the older brother effect (see Blanchard & Bogaert for an explanation) predicted same-sex attractions but not same-sex sexual activity, indicating that having older brothers influences the propensity for male-male attractions but not the decision to engage in overt male-male sex. The findings suggests that biology may be in charge of the former but environment or culture may influence the latter.

Cameron, P., & Cameron, K. (1995). Does incest cause homosexuality? Psychological Reports, 76, 611-621.

This study provided support for the hypothesis that homosexuality may develop in response to childhood incest. Bisexuals and homosexuals had higher rates of same-sex and opposite-

sex incest as compared to heterosexuals, suggesting that homosexuality is a learned behavior.

Doll, L. S., Joy, D., Bartholow B. N., & Harrison, J. S. (1992). Self-reported childhood and adolescent sexual abuse among homosexual and bisexual men. Child Abuse & Neglect, 16, 855-864.

Gay and bisexual men revealed whether or not they had been victims of child abuse. Results showed that 30% of the respondents had been persuaded or forced to have sex with older and physically stronger adult men. The study is flawed, however, because no control group was studied. One could also argue that the victims of sexual abuse may appear very effeminate, which makes them more likely victims.

Greenberg, A. S., & Bailey, J. M. (2001). Parental selection of children's sexual orientation. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 30, 423-437.

If homosexuality has a genetic basis, in the future scientists might be able to select for or against this trait. Greenberg and Bailey ask whether or not such a practice is morally objectionable. They present evidence that leads them to conclude that it is not objectionable. Detractors sharply criticized the article, and the authors were accused of being anti-gay social Darwinists. Readers may find the article a bit difficult to read, as it is wordy and circuitous, but it is also fascinating.

Hamer, D. H., Hu, S., Magnuson, V. L., Hu, N., & Pattatucci, A. M. L. (1993). A linkage between DNA markers on the X chromosome and male sexual orientation. Science, 261, 321-327.

Hamer et al. published the first documentation of a link between male homosexuality and DNA markers on the X chromosome. These results ignited a debate as to the validity of the study and its implications. Two years later Hamer and Copeland (1995, **BK**) wrote a response to the controversy.

LeVay, S. (1991). A difference in hypothalamic structure between heterosexual and homosexual men. Science, 253, 1034-1037.

LeVay was the first neurophysiologist to report a brain difference between homosexual and heterosexual men. Specifically, the interstitial nucleus of the anterior hypothalamus (INAH) was significantly larger in heterosexual men when compared to homosexual men. Small sample size and the presumption of heterosexuality in the controls were weaknesses of this study. Subsequent research has replicated LeVay's findings.

Mitchell, S. A. (2002). Psychodynamics, homosexuality, and the question of pathology. Studies in Gender and Sexuality, 3, 3-21.

Mitchell reviews the psychoanalytic interpretation of homosexuality. Freud viewed homosexuality as an immature form of sexual behavior, and he thought it pathological if

expressed during adulthood. Mitchell's main point is that modern day psychoanalytical theory no longer implies pathology so such interpretations of homosexuality deserve further consideration.

Mustanski, B. S., Chivers, M. L., & Bailey, J. M. (2002). A critical review of recent biological research on human sexual orientation. Annual Review of Sex Research, 13, 89-140.

This article critically assesses the contemporary research on the biological basis of homosexuality. The analysis examines the research on hormones, neuroanatomy, genetics, body structure, developmental stability, and number of older brothers. This is a must read for anyone interested in this topic.

Williams, T. J., Pepitone, M. E., Christensen, S. E., Cooke, B. M., Huberman, A. D., Breedlove, N. J., et al. (2000). Finger length ratios and sexual orientation. Nature, 404, 455-456.

A small second and fourth finger length ratio (2D:4D ratio) is a documented sign of exposure to prenatal androgens. Lesbian 2D:4D ratios are significantly smaller than those of heterosexual women but no different from those of heterosexual men. This finding suggests that lesbians are exposed to prenatal androgen levels on a par with heterosexual males.

## Documentary Films

60 Minutes (Producers). (August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Gay or straight? [TV broadcast]. New York: CBS News. (15 min)

This video can be viewed at the Web address listed below.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/03/09/60minutes/main1385230.shtml>

This is a clip from a 60 Minutes segment concerning the biology of homosexuality. Leslie Stall talks to twin boys; Jared likes G.I. Joe, military toys, and camouflage whereas Adam likes stuffed animals, finger nail polish, and the color pink. Stall explains that Adam displays gender nonconformity and that such boys often identify as gay later in life. Further footage shows a conversation with Michael Bailey, a well-known researcher, about his belief that homosexuality is a biological phenomenon.

Thomas, A. (Director). (2005). Middle sexes: Redefining he and she. [TV broadcast], New York: HBO. (75 min)

This HBO documentary focuses on people whose gender and behavior do not fit neatly into the category of male or female. The film weaves the stories of intersexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, and their families with conversations with gender specialists.

Teaching Topic: Brain Differences in Transsexuals

Researchers in Holland discovered a structure in the brains of MTF transsexuals that is identical to the type seen in the brains of “ordinary” women. This movie contains a short discussion of this research.

Teaching Topic: Older Brother Effect

Bogaert (2003) reported that gay men have twice as many older brothers than do straight men. Why? He hypothesized that women who are pregnant with sons may produce antibodies in response to a male antigen known as H-Y. These antibodies may then affect the development of the fetal brain in subsequent sons.

Minhas, N. (Executive Producer). The truth about gay animals [TV broadcast]. (2002). London: UK Channel 4. (60 min)

Comedian Scott Copurro hosts this light hearted but informative movie about homosexuality in the animal world. This movie would be an excellent supplement to Bagemihl's (1999) book.

## Web Sites

Born Gay ProCon

<http://www.borngayprocon.org/>

The web site presents the psychology versus biology debate of homosexuality. The debate is broken into sub-issues, and evidence for and against each is fairly presented. Below is a list of those sub-topics:

- Homosexuality in Animals
- The Gay Gene
- Hormones
- Anatomical Differences
- Developmental Explanations
- Parent and Sibling Relations
- Victims of Child Abuse
- Reparative Therapy
- Religious Considerations
- Social and Legal Implications

NARTH: National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality

<http://www.narth.com/>

This web site features articles from the psychoanalytical perspective on homosexuality, a theory that is not well supported in the mainstream psychological literature. The site discredits the research indicating that homosexuality has a biological basis. Below are two examples.

Berger, J. (2002, September 30). A critique of the writings of Richard Isay. Retrieved January 1, 2007 from <http://www.narth.com/docs/1996papers/berger.html>  
Berger refutes the writings of the psychoanalyst Isay who has written often about the lack of evidence supporting the psychoanalytic explanation of homosexuality.

Tabin, J. (1995, July 29). Clinically based thoughts about the development of homosexuality. Collected Papers from the NARTH Annual Conference. Retrieved January 1, 2007, from <http://www.narth.com/docs/1995papers/tabin.html>  
Tabin discredits the research showing that homosexuality has a genetic basis and asserts that homosexuality develops from faulty ego identity development.

Religious Tolerance: Do Genes Cause Homosexuality?

[http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom\\_caus3.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_caus3.htm)

This site was written by a multifaith religious organization called Religious Tolerance. Its mission is to present all sides of controversial topics, including homosexuality. The site does an excellent job of explaining the beliefs of religious conservatives. The site considers topics such as the following:

- A domineering mother and distant father cause homosexuality.
- Homosexuality is the work of the devil.
- Childhood sexual molestation by an adult leads to homosexuality.
- Homosexuality is an addiction.
- Same-sex attractions will diminish if homosexuals put their trust in Jesus.
- Homosexuality is not normal and to treat it as such is dangerous for children.
- The concordance rate of homosexuality in twin brothers is not 100%, so the genetic theory must be dismissed.
- God made the institution of marriage only for men and women.
- Same-sex-attractions are sinful.

## MODULE 2: HOMOPHOBIA

### Introduction

**JN** = Journal, **BK** = Book, & **WEB** = Web site

Homophobia is an illogical fear of, aversion to, or bigotry against homosexuality (Blumenfeld, 1992, **BK**), and four kinds are illustrated in popular movies or television shows. Interpersonal homophobia is when a person actively discriminates against homosexuals like in the movie Philadelphia (Demme, 1993) when a lawyer turns down a lawsuit because the litigant is gay. Institutionalized homophobia occurs when an organization actively discriminates against homosexuals. The US military's exclusion of gays is an example, and the documentary Coming Out Under Fire (Dong, 1994) provides an excellent history of this practice. Cultural homophobia refers to social standards that indicate that homosexuality is nonexistent or inferior. For examples, a content analysis of 22 television situation comedies found that gay characters were grossly unrepresented (Fouts & Inch, 2005, **JN**). Finally, internalized homophobia is the hatred of homosexuality in others and in oneself as expressed, for example, by the character of Ennis in the movie Brokeback Mountain (Ang, 2005).

The cause of homophobia is not well understood. It may be a product of ignorance, an attempt to protect heterosexual privilege, a reaction to same-sex child abuse (Janoff, 2005, **BK**), a sign of latent homosexuality (Adams, Wright, & Lohr, 1996, **JN**), or a rite of passage for young boys (Plummer, 2000 **BK**). Research indicates that internalized homophobia is linked to alcohol abuse (Amadio, 2006, **JN**), poor quality of life (Lewis, Derlega, Clarke, & Kuang, 2006, **JN**), and sexual compulsivity (Dew & Chaney, 2005, **JN**). Homophobia is also harmful in schools (Ugly Duckling Campaign, n.d., **WEB**), damaging in counseling practice (Bowers, Plummer, & Minichiello, 2005, **JN**), and an impediment to job satisfaction and advancement (Burke & White, 2001, **JN**). In fact, Blumenfeld (1992, **BK**) contends that homophobia is also harmful to heterosexuals. The most extreme form of homophobia is gay-directed physical violence. Licensed to Kill (Dong, 1997) is a chilling documentary about homophobic men who murder gays, and the feature film Hate Crime (Stovall, 2005) offers a brutal portrayal of homophobic violence.

Opposition to homosexuality is strong. A number of groups in the United States actively oppose gay marriage, gays families, and gay rights (Crusading Anti-Homosexual Groups, n.d., **WEB**). Such organizations often hold conservative fundamentalist beliefs, which is a strong predictor of homophobia (Schwartz & Lindley, 2005, **JN**). Homophobia is even more of a problem in developing countries. Dangerous Living: Coming Out in the Developing World (Scagliotti, 2003, documentary) provides the viewer with a close examination of homophobia outside the U. S., and Amnesty International (n.d., **WEB**) documents LGBT human rights violations globally. Homophobia can be counteracted in a number of different ways. Exercises are often useful and the books by Sears and Williams (1997) and Stewart (1999) offer a number of activities that are ideal for classroom use. A plethora of organizations are dedicated to reducing homophobia including Glaad (n.d., **WEB**), The Citizens Against Homophobia (n.d.,

**WEB**) and The Ugly Duckling Campaign (n.d., **WEB**). The last decade has seen a definite decline in homophobia but there is still need for improvement.

## Books

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

This collection of essays argues how homophobia is damaging to all people. Two particularly useful ones are listed below:

David Eberly's essay "Homophobia, Censorship and the Arts" discusses censorship of homoerotic art and how this hurts all creative endeavors.

Jeffrey Levi in "Homophobia and AIDS Public Policy" examines how the government eroded American public health policies and made it difficult to secure funding for the development of top-notch prevention programs.

Janoff, D. V. (2005). Pink blood: Homophobic violence in Canada. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

The book analyses information on the frequency of homophobic crimes, the types of violence used in gay attacks, the locations where gay violence is committed, the number of people involved in homophobic attacks, and how often alcohol is a factor in violence against gays and lesbians.

"Chapter 2: Theories of Homophobia: Why Do They Want to Hurt Us?" is an excellent review of six explanations of why homophobia occurs.

"Chapter 3: The Horror of Homophobic Violence" reports statistics on who the victims of gay-directed violence are, where the violence most often occurs, and what kind of violence they most frequently experience.

Plummer, D. (2000). One of the boys: Masculinity, homophobia, and modern manhood. New York: Harrington Park Press.

The thesis of this book is that homophobia or the "homophobia passage" is a significant factor in the identity development of gay and straight men. Homophobia is more than just a fear; it is a central component of what it means to be a man.

"Chapter 3: Separating the Men from the Boys" posits that starting at a very young age, boys undergo extensive homophobic training in school, on the playground, and at home in the form of teasing, ridicule, and name calling which stays with them for life.

"Chapter 4: Fashioning the Male Self" examines the homophobic pressures on heterosexual and homosexual young men as they begin to mature.

Sears, T., & Williams, W. L. (Eds.). (1997). Overcoming heterosexism and homophobia: Strategies that work: Lesbian & gay studies. New York: Columbia University Press.

The book is a collection of essays on how to decrease homophobia. Most impressive is that the essays cover just about every population: high school students, religious leaders, business leaders, ethnic communities, counselors in training, television news stations, and teachers. “Part III: Working with Students,” is most relevant to this module.

A New Jersey high school teacher named Paula Alida Roy writes “Language in the Classroom.” She discusses how to normalize homosexuality for students through language and literature. She models the use of terms like lesbian and gay, she tells students how and why words like dike and fag are hurtful, she always uses the pronouns she-she, he-he, and he-she with reference to romantic love, she tells them about the lives of gay authors like Oscar Wilde, Willa Cather, and James Baldwin, and she introduces them to literature with homoerotic themes. Student feedback indicated that many students became more tolerant from being in her classroom.

Sue Sattel, Melissa Keyes, and Pat Tupper point out in “Sexual Harassment and Sexual Orientation: The Coaches’ Corner” how the sports field and the locker room are breeding grounds for homophobia. For example, football coaches have been known to use football plays named “fag right”, and “fag left” or call their players “pussies” or “limp wrists” and tell them to “go home and play with your sisters.” This essay offers a number of techniques and strategies to begin changing such a culture.

Stewart, C. (1999). Sexually stigmatized communities: Reducing heterosexism and homophobia: An awareness training manual. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

This book suggests over 40 activities to reduce homophobia and heterosexism. Two examples are below:

- “Shared-Weekend Experience” is a role-play exercise. Students tell a partner what they did over the weekend but are instructed not to indicate the gender of the people involved. The purpose is to have students better understand the effort it takes to conceal homosexuality.
- “What Would It Be like Without Homophobia?” is a student writing exercise whose purpose is to help students imagine the positive impact a world without homophobia would have on all people.

## Articles

Adams, H. E., Wright, L. W., Jr., & Lohr, B. A. (1996). Is homophobia associated with significant homosexual arousal? Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 105, 440-445.

Psychoanalytic theory has long posited that homophobia is latent homosexuality in disguise. In this study both homophobic and nonhomophobic heterosexuals watched gay male, lesbian, and heterosexual pornography. Both groups of men became sexually aroused while viewing heterosexual and lesbian pornography but only homophobic men were aroused by gay male pornography.

Amadio, D. M. (2006). Internalized heterosexism, alcohol use, and alcohol-related problems among lesbians and gay men. Addictive Behaviors, 31, 1153-1162.

Amadio showed that lesbians with high levels of internalized homophobia drink alcohol significantly more than controls but that gay males do not.

Bowers, R., Plummer, D., & Minichiello, V. (2005). Homophobia in counselling practice. International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 27, 471-489.

Qualitative research revealed that homophobia in counseling practice is a considerable problem. A number of real life examples are provided. The authors stress that homophobia in counseling needs to be better understood and eliminated.

Burke, B. P., & White, J. C. (2001). Wellbeing of gay, lesbian, and bisexual doctors. British Medical Journal, 322, 422-424.

Several studies have documented the presence of homophobia in the medical field. LBG doctors report harassment, disrespect, and lost job opportunities because of their sexual orientation. The article points out that homophobia can be damaging to both LGBT patients and doctors and suggests methods to enact change. Homophobia is now thought to have a biological basis so I am surprised that the medical field is not more tolerant of sexual minorities.

Currie, M. R., Cunningham, E. G., & Findlay, B. M. (2004). The short Internalized Homonegativity Scale: Examination of the factorial structure of a new measure of internalized homophobia. Educational and Psychological Measurements, 64, 1053-1067.

The authors constructed a new and shorter form of the internalized homonegativity scale, validated it, and found it to be psychometrically sound. Students often wonder how it is possible for someone who is gay to also hate homosexuality. Distributing this survey in class might help facilitate their understanding of the concept.

Dew, B. J., & Chaney, M. P. (2005). The relationship among sexual compulsivity, internalized homophobia, and HIV at-risk sexual behavior in gay and bisexual male users of internet chat rooms. Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 12, 259-273.

Internalized homophobia was correlated with sexually compulsive behavior. The authors conclude that gay chat rooms that facilitate face-to-face sexual encounters have made sexually compulsive and risky behaviors a serious problem.

Fouts, G., & Inch, R. (2005). Homosexuality in TV situation comedies: Characters and verbal comments. Journal of Homosexuality, *49*, 35-45.

This content analysis of 22 television situation comedies revealed that only 2% of 125 main characters are homosexual, which is lower than the 10-13% occurrence rates found in the United States. All 125 characters were male and between the ages of 20-35. The lack of gay role models for gay and lesbian teens is evident. Showing a clip from one of these situation comedies would stimulate class discussion.

Lewis, R. J., Derlega, V. J., Clarke, E. G., & Kuang, J. C. (2006). Stigma consciousness, social constraints, and lesbian well-being. Journal of Counseling Psychology, *53*, 48-56.

Stigma consciousness is known to impact the well being of lesbians. This study sought to measure the mediating role of social constraints or the stress associated with discussing sexual orientation. For lesbians high on social constraints, stigma consciousness was correlated with physical complaints, negative thinking, and internalized homophobia. The importance of discussing lesbian-oriented issues with a trusted person is highlighted.

Schwartz, J. P., & Lindley, L. D. (2005). Religious fundamentalism and attachment: Prediction of homophobia. International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, *15*, 145-157.

Schwartz and Lindley measured religious conservatism, attachment style, gender, and homophobia. Gender and evangelicalism were predictive of homophobia, but contrary to predictions, attachment style was not. The attachment measure used in this study is, however, outdated, which may explain the lack of significant relations.

## Documentary Films

Barbosa, P. (Director). (2004). Unlearning homophobia series [Motion picture]. (Available from EyeBite Productions, 4150 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1, San Francisco CA, 94114)

This series includes three short films, each dealing with some aspect of homophobia.

“All God’s Children” is a political, social, and religious analysis of sexual orientation in African Americans. (26 min)

“De Colores” presents stories of Latino families with strong homophobic tendencies who come to accept their gay children. (28 min)

“Straight from the Heart” explores how parents deal with their homosexual children. The viewer meets a police chief who is very proud of his lesbian daughter, a Mormon family whose son died of AIDS, and a Black woman with two lesbian daughters whom she claims caught their lesbianism from White people. (24 min)

De La Peña. N. (Director). (1999). The jaundiced eye [Motion picture]. United States: Vanguard Cinema (89 min)

This is the harrowing story of a gay man (Stephen) and his straight father (Melvin) who were falsely accused and convicted of sexually molesting Stephen’s son.

Teaching Topic: Homosexuality and Pedophilia

Several people in this film equate pedophilia with homosexuality. This film could be used to dispel this very common misconception.

Teaching Topic: Interviews

The film includes interviews between psychologists and Stephen’s son, which can stimulate class discussion of false memories and homophobia.

Dong. A. (Director). (1994). Coming out under fire [Motion picture]. United States: DeepFocus Productions (71 min)

The film tells the stories of nine gay and lesbian veterans of World War II. Each was a victim of anti-homosexual policies and unfair treatment. It chronicles how the military screened, detected, identified, and ejected homosexuals from their midst.

Teaching Topic: Caught and Punished

Many in the film were caught--one because someone turned him in, another because he was found printing an underground gay newsletter, yet another because of the contents of a personal letter, and lastly simply because of suspicions. When exposed, homosexual suspects were court-martialed, sentenced to hard labor, threatened with bodily harm, expelled, and humiliated.

Teaching Topic: The 1993 U.S. Senate Hearings on Gays in the Military

The film starts and ends with clips from the hearings and provides even more footage as an extra. It is a chilling reminder that the military's stance on gays in the military has not changed.

Dong, A. (Director). (1997). Licensed to kill [Motion picture]. United States: DeepFocus Productions (77 min)

This movie tells the stories of 10 men convicted of murdering gay people in hate crimes. The filmmaker interviews all 10 and asks them "Why did you do it?" Their answers are varied, strangely fascinating, and scary.

Teaching Topic: Homophobia Disguised as Robbery

Donald Aldrich sought out gay men to rob and harass. He did this at local "pick up" parks because he knew that the victims would not report his crimes.

Teaching Topic: Victim of Molestation

A family friend sexually molested William Cross when he was 7 years old. Many years later Williams was having drinks with a man on a rooftop when the man made a pass at him. This threw William into a rage during which he stabbed his companion to death.

Teaching Topic: Violent Internalized Homophobia

Jay Johnson was a closeted homosexual from a prominent and religious family. He became a serial killer of gays at "pick up" parks; his goal was to eradicate his source of temptation.

Scagliotti, J. (Director). (2003). Dangerous living: Coming out in the developing world [Motion picture]. United States: First Run Features (60 min)

In the past decade Americans have become familiar with the lives and struggles of gay people in the U.S., but have not given much thought to the status of gay people in other countries. This movie covers homophobia, gay rights, and human rights violations in Honduras, India, Egypt, Namibia, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

Teaching Topic: The Cairo 52

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 a group of gay men were on a party boat on the Nile in Cairo. That night, police stormed the boat, stopped the festivities, then arrested and jailed 52 men. They were beaten, tortured, unfairly prosecuted, and sentenced to long prison terms. This spearheaded a call for gay rights in Egypt and across the world. The Cairo 52 is Egypt's Stonewall.

Teaching Topic: First Discovery

Several people in the film talk about when they first discovered that they were not the only person in the world with same-sex attractions. Listening to these stories one becomes aware of how closeted their environments must have been. Several people said that access to the Internet changed their lives

## Feature Films

SPOILER after the citation indicates that major plot twists or film endings are given away.

Ang, L. (Director). (2005). Brokeback mountain [Motion picture]. United States: Universal Pictures (134 min)

This movie tells the story of a ranch hand Ennis and an aspiring rodeo cowboy Jake who meet in Wyoming in 1963. They fall in love and forge a secret bond that lasts a lifetime.

Teaching Moment: Internalized Homophobia  
Many scenes illustrate that Ennis is disgusted with himself.

Discussion Topic:  
This movie certainly is not the first film about gay men who struggle with their sexual orientation. Why did this film create such a stir?

Demme, J. (Director). (1993). Philadelphia [Motion picture]. United States: Sony Pictures (125 min)

Andrew Beckett is a top-notch gay lawyer. He gets fired when the firm discovers his sexual orientation and HIV health status. In an attempt to save his job, Andrew hires a small time lawyer to sue the law firm for unlawful dismissal.

Teaching Topic: Andrew has an extremely accepting family  
Many gay people have terrible stories about when they came out to their family. Andrew's experience paints an entirely different picture. However, I wondered if the Beckett family was too good to be true.

Teaching Topic: Andrew hires a homophobic lawyer  
Andrew's lawyer is very homophobic but with time he illustrates that change is possible.

Mendes, S. (Director). (1999). American beauty [Motion picture]. United States: DreamWorks) (122 min)

SPOILER

This film tells the sordid tale of the Burnham family. The wife has an affair, the husband tries to seduce a teenager, and their daughter is apathetic and shallow. The neighbors are not much better.

Teaching Topic: The Homophobic Neighbor  
The neighbor thinks his son is gay, he thinks Lester Burnham is gay, he detests the gay couple down the road, and he sees homosexuality everywhere. He makes a sexual overture towards Lester. The episode illustrates the hypothesis that homophobia is a reaction to one's own same-sex attractions.

Stovall, T. (Director). (2005). Hate crime [Motion picture]. United States: Image Entertainment (104 min)

SPOILER

This story portrays two gay men, Trey and Robbie, who live in a quiet suburban home. The couple is getting married soon, and they have been discussing having a family. Then a religious homophobe moves in next door. Trey is brutally attacked by this neighbor and struggles for his life in the hospital.

Teaching Topic: The Level of Hate

The vitriol of the neighbor is palpable, giving the viewer a look at what fuels gay-directed hate crimes.

Teaching Topic: The Crime

Trey was brutally beaten with a baseball bat. This scene is a vivid depiction of the level of violence that can be associated with anti-homosexual crimes.

## Web Sites

Amnesty International

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Amnesty International is an organization dedicated to protecting human rights everywhere. This site contains several articles about LBGT people and the violation of their civil rights. Below are two examples.

(2004, October 15). Serbia: Official silence greets homophobic poster campaign. Amnesty News, AI Index: EUR 70/023/2004. Retrieved January 1, 2007 from

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR700232004?open&of=ENG-YUG>

In Serbia an anti-gay group Obraz has engaged in a number of anti-gay activities including painting offensive graffiti and attacking people involved in a gay pride march. Most recently they ran an anti-gay poster program. Various organizations have filed complaints with the government but no action has been taken.

(2005, November 25). Poland: LGBT rights under attack. Amnesty News, AL Index: EUR 37/002/2005. Retrieved January 1, 2007 from

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR370022005?open&of=ENG-2U2>

The Polish government has a reputation for being openly homophobic. They have banned events sponsored by LBGT organizations and blatantly use inflammatory language when referring to gays. Recently the government disbanded a committee assigned to protect the rights of LBGT people.

Citizens Against Homophobia (CAH)

<http://www.actwin.com/cahp/>

CAH develops print advertisements and radio messages to reduce homophobia. Visitors to this site can view and hear them.

Crusading Anti-Homosexual Groups

<http://www.actwin.com/eatonohio/gay/antigroup.html>

This web site lists 44 web sites of organizations that have active anti-gay campaigns including the following:

Alliance for Marriage

<http://www.allianceformarriage.org/site/PageServer>

This site is dedicated to the passage of an amendment that would ban same-sex marriages.

Christian Coalition of America

<http://www.cc.org/about.cfm>

This conservative Christian group lobbies to enact change in the American government. One of their goals is to pass a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

NoSpecialrights.net

<http://www.nospecialrights.net/>

This group actively fights against homosexual activism in order to stop the erosion of America's religious and moral principles.

GASP Measures Database

<http://learn.psych.utah.edu/psych/psych/gasp/newdbindex.jsp>

This is an APA-sponsored web site that lists psychological instruments that were intended for LGBT subjects or groups. These include measures of biphobia, internalized homophobia, gender identity, homonegativity, and transphobia. Each scale comes with a description, citation, author contact information, web site address, and a reliability and validity report.

Glaad: Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation

<http://www.glaad.org>

Glaad is dedicated to ensuring that the media fairly present LGBT people and issues in order to reduce homophobia. The Glaad web site reports on media lapses.

Ugly Ducklings Campaign

<http://www.uglyducklings.org/>

The Ugly Duckling is a national campaign dedicated to the reduction of homophobic bullying and harassment of children and teens. A film and an education kit are available to communities who want to combat this problem. The kit includes information, exercises, discussion topics, and links. Much of this information can be found on the web site and a clip of the film can be viewed there as well.

## MODULE 3: REPARATIVE THERAPY

### Introduction

**JN** = Journal, **BK** = Book, & **WEB** = Web site

Psychology has had a long history of viewing homosexuality as a mental illness. Freud conjectured that homosexuality comes about when a male child fails to bond with his father and overidentifies with his mother (Drescher, 1998, **JN**). The American Psychological Association took homosexuality out of the DSM II in 1973 (Spitzer, 1981, **JN**) but some psychologists still view homosexuality as pathological. Reparative therapists subscribe to the psychoanalytic view and attempt to guide people out of homosexuality (NARTH, n.d., **WEB**). Reparative therapy can include masculinity training (Nicolosi & Nicolosi, 2002, **BK**), healing the father-son relationship, treating hetero-social wounds (Cohen, 2000; **BK**), holding therapy, hitting or anger release therapy, and faith-based counseling (Evergreen International, n.d., **WEB**; JONAH, n.d., **WEB**). Cohen demonstrates two of his most controversial treatments, holding and hitting therapy, in a recent television documentary (Simkin, 2006).

Reparative therapy has become increasingly more popular even while the effectiveness of this therapy has been called into question (Bright, 2004, **JN**; Jenkins & Johnson, 2004, **JN**). Many professional organizations have come out with statements opposing reparative therapy and seek to ban its use (American Psychiatric Association, n.d., **WEB**; American Psychological Association, n.d., **WEB**). Critics claim that reparative therapists exaggerate the effectiveness of their treatments and that the evidence is only anecdotal. However, Spitzer (2003, **JN**) interviewed gay and lesbian reparative therapy recipients and concluded that it could be effective for some very motivated individuals. Detractors described his findings as flawed, and a maelstrom of controversy ensued, which eventually led to the publication of a book (Drescher & Zucker, 2006).

Opposition to reparative therapy is also strong on ethical grounds (Bright, 2004, **JN**; Jenkins & Johnson, 2004, **JN**). Bensen's book (2003) exposes the false claims and scandals associated with the ex-gay movement. Critics claim that reparative therapy can be harmful (Jones, Botsko, & Gorman, 2003, **JN**) and that psychoanalytical clinicians who counsel gays and lesbians are biased (Lilling & Friedman, 1995, **JN**). Many ex-gay survivors also charge that reparative therapy did them harm (Ex-Gay Watch, n.d., **WEB**) as poignantly illustrated in the documentary films Family Fundamentals (Dong, 2002) and One Nation Under God (Maniaci & Rzeznik, 1992).

Gay affirmative therapy is an effective alternative to reparative therapy (Milton & Coyle, 1999, **JN**; Morrow & Beckstead, 2004, **JN**). Gay affirmative therapists view homosexuality as a normal variant of human sexuality and see it as their responsibility to affirm their homosexual clients, not change them (Chernin & Johnson, 2003, **BK**). To do this, therapists must understand homosexual issues and should obtain clinical training (Milton & Coyle, 1999, **JN**). Morrow and Beckstead (2004, **JN**) also suggest that the religious factors that dispose people to seek reparative therapy need to be better understood.

## Books

Bensen, W. R. (2003). Anything but straight: Unmasking the scandals and lies behind the ex – gay myth. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.

Bensen’s book provides a comprehensive history of the ex-gay movement and exposes the many false claims and scandals associated with the movement.

“Act II: Reparative Therapy”

This section offers a blistering condemnation of the work done by Joseph Nicolosi and Richard Cohen.

“Act III: The Encore”

Bensen suggests ways that GLBT individuals can respond to and discredit the practice of reparative therapy.

Chernin, J. N., & Johnson, M. R. (2003). Affirmative psychotherapy and counseling for lesbians and gay men. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Chernin and Johnson present an overview of gay-affirmative therapy in this treatise.

“Chapter 3: Affirmative Individual Psychotherapy”

This chapter reviews the common themes and issues associated with gay-affirmative therapy: coming out, relationships, spiritual concerns, substance abuse problems and HIV/AIDS.

Cohen, R. A. (2000). Coming out straight: Understanding and healing homosexuality. Winchester, VA: Oakhill Press.

This is a fascinating story written by an ex-gay who struggled with same-sex attractions all of his life. He has since become a counselor and now is considered one of the top experts on sexual reorientation therapy.

“Chapter 1: My Story: Coming Out Straight”

Cohen describes his interesting and long journey.

“Chapter 4: The Process of Healing”

Cohen gives a comprehensive description of the therapeutic tools necessary to change sexual orientation.

At the following address Richard Cohen discuss his book. <http://uptv.org/play.php?27>

Drescher, J., & Zucker, K. J. (Eds). (2006). Ex-gay research: Analyzing the Spitzer study and its relation to science, religion, politics and culture. New York: Harrington Press.

Robert Spitzer (2003) claimed that reparative therapy can be effective for some individuals. These claims launched a media sensation that enflamed controversy in political, religious, and therapeutic communities. Drescher and Zucker present 37 essays on every aspect of this issue. It is a fascinating read and makes this complicated topic easy to understand.

Nicolosi, J. (1999). Healing homosexuality: Case studies of reparative therapy. Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson.

This book tells the stories of many men who have struggled with being gay.

“Chapter 3: Albert-Father John - The Double Life.”

This is about a Catholic priest who sought reparative therapy because he was sexually drawn to men and addicted to pornography.

“Chapter 6: Steve - The Seeker of Male Symbols”

This is the story of a very attractive, promiscuous, and narcissistic gay man. He entered therapy and made some strides. In the end, however, he dropped out of therapy and resumed his previous life, illustrating that reparative therapy does not always work.

Nicolosi, J., & Nicolosi, L. A. (2002). A parent's guide to preventing homosexuality. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

The book instructs parents on how to decide if their son is a pre-homosexual (a child who will become gay) and then gives homegrown therapeutic techniques to reverse this process. Reparative therapy is based on the unsupported belief that male homosexuality develops when a child becomes alienated from his own masculinity. The following two chapters provide an excellent introduction to these ideas, theories, and treatments.

“Chapter 1: Masculinity Is an Achievement”

This chapter introduces the reader to the concept of pre-homosexual boys.

“Chapter 9: The Healing Process”

This chapter instructs parents on what to do for their pre-homosexual boys. It also contains interviews between Nicolosi and parents of pre-gay or gay boys. A review of some of the unusual tactics used to make someone straight will no doubt lead to vigorous classroom conversations.

## Articles

Bright, C. (2004). Deconstructing reparative therapy: An examination of the processes involved when attempting to change sexual orientation. Clinical Social Work Journal, 32, 471-481.

The authors challenge the effectiveness of reparative therapy. The article describes the reparative therapy process, reveals that it has no empirical support, delineates the role religion and politics have played in endorsing this therapeutic approach, and exposes the unethical practices used by many reparative therapists.

Drescher, J. (1998). I'm your handyman: A history of reparative therapies. Journal of Homosexuality, 36, 19-42.

This article covers the history of the psychoanalytical interpretation of homosexuality and provides a description of how this theory has evolved into a religious and political juggernaut.

Jones, M. A., Botsko, M., & Gorman, B. S. (2003). Predictors of psychotherapeutic benefit of lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients: The effects of sexual orientation matching and other factors. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, and Training, 40, 289-301.

The predictors of therapeutic benefit for LBGT clients are examined in a countrywide study. Positive predictors included the age that therapy commenced, the number of sessions attended, patient identification as LBGT at the beginning of therapy, and having a homosexual, bisexual, or female trained therapist. Negative factors were having a therapist who was a psychoanalyst or one who used reparative therapy.

Jenkins, D., & Johnson, L. B. (2004). Unethical treatment of gay and lesbian people with conversion therapy. Families in Society, 85, 557-561.

The National Association of Social Workers has taken a stance against reparative therapy as unnecessary, ineffective, and unethical. The article provides an in eye-opening discussion of the six codes or values that this organization believes reparative therapy actively breaks.

Lilling, A. H., & Friedman, R. C. (1995). Bias towards gay patients by psychoanalytic clinicians: An empirical investigation. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 24, 562-570.

Therapists rated homosexual clients as significantly more impaired than their heterosexual counterparts. I believe these results are disturbing, given that most reparative therapists endorse a psychoanalytical interpretation of homosexuality.

Milton, M., & Coyle, A. (1999). Lesbian and gay affirmative psychotherapy: Issues in theory and practice. Sexual & Marital Therapy, 14, 43-59.

Gay affirmative therapy views sexuality as immutable and considers it the therapist's job to affirm not change their homosexual clients. Milton and Coyle present a history of this therapeutic approach and discuss the importance of clinical training in this area.

Morrow, S. L., & Beckstead, A. L. (2004). Conversion therapy for same-sex attracted clients in religious conflict: Context, predisposing factors, experiences, and implications for therapy. Counseling Psychologist, 32, 641-650.

Despite evidence to the contrary, a growing number of religious organizations tout the effectiveness of conversion therapies. Morrow and Beckstead discuss the existing research on what disposes individuals in religious conflict to seek this kind of help and then suggest future research ideas.

Spitzer, R. L. (1981). The diagnostic status of homosexuality in DSM-III: A reformulation of the issues. American Journal of Psychiatry, 138, 210-215.

Spitzer was one of the psychologists responsible for removing homosexuality from the DSM II, and in this article he reviews that process. Ironically, Spitzer later (2003) published an article on the effectiveness of reparative therapy, which caused much controversy.

Spitzer, R. L. (2003). Can some gay men and lesbians change their sexual orientation? 200 participants reporting a change from homosexual to heterosexual orientation. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32, 403-417.

Spitzer interviewed gay men and lesbians who experienced a change in their sexual orientation after undergoing reparative therapy. Participants reported a change from mostly or entirely homosexual to mostly heterosexual but very few described a total change. Spitzer concluded that for some very motivated gay individuals, reparative therapy could have a significant and lasting effect. This article ignited a heated debate about reparative therapy. (See Drescher & Zucker, 2006, **BK**).

## Documentary Films

Dong, A. (Director). (2002). Family fundamentals [Motion picture]. United States: DeepFocus Pictures (75 min)

This documentary presents some fundamentalist families who are staunchly anti-gay and strong proponents of reorientation therapy even though they have openly gay offspring.

**Kathleen Brenner**

This woman founded a Christian ministry for parents who have children who have “decided” to become gay. Her revulsion is obvious when she discusses the gay “life style.” Kathleen does however, have an adult daughter (Susan) who came out as a lesbian in her late 30s, after two heterosexual marriages.

**Brett Mathew**

Brett, an openly gay young man living in Los Angeles, was brought up Mormon and his father is a well-known bishop. Brett came out to his family 2 years ago. It did not go well, and Brett’s anguish is evident as he talks about the experience.

Maniaci, T. & Rzeznik, F. (Directors). (1992). One nation under God [Motion picture]. United States: First Run Features (83 min)

This film’s goal is to reveal the dangers and ineffectiveness of reparative therapy by interviewing many post-reparative therapy patients who experienced no sexual orientation change and feel damaged and violated by the experience.

**Teaching Topic: The Best**

Two men held powerful positions in Exodus International, one of the oldest ex-gay organizations in the country. They served as counselors together for over a decade but created a scandal when they fell in love and left Exodus to get married.

Simkin, M. (Commentator). (2006, August 26<sup>th</sup>). Gay conversion - curing homosexuality [Television broadcast]. Sydney, Australia: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (21 min)

Richard Cohen discusses his book Coming Out Straight and demonstrates two of his controversial reparative therapy techniques. One is touch therapy in which he cradles a grown man to reconstruct a healthy father-son relationship and the other is bioenergetics in which a client violently hits a pillow in order to let go of bad memories lodged in his muscles.

This video can be viewed at the web address listed below.

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7180551825484297720>

## Web Sites

Evergreen International: Latter-Day Saints

<http://www.evergreeninternational.org/>

Evergreen is a non-profit reparative therapy organization affiliated with the Mormon church. It offers help to people who want to leave the “homosexual lifestyle.” It provides a voluminous amount of information on homosexual behavior, depression, emotions, the Gospel, masculinity, femininity, relationships, self-perception, suicide, support groups, therapy, and “thinking twisted.”

Ex-Gay Watch

<http://www.exgaywatch.com/wp/media-inquiries/>

Ex-Gay Watch is a web site committed to monitoring the ex-gay movement. Blogs, videos, articles, book reviews, and links on the negative aspect of conversion therapies are provided.

An Ex-Gay Watch Original Video - The Spitzer Study: Methodological Flaws and Abuse in Anti-Gay Politics

<http://www.exgaywatch.com/wp/2007/02/an-ex-gay-watch-original-video-the-spitzer-study-methodological-flaws-and-abuse-in-anti-gay-politics/>

Spitzer (2003, JN) presented evidence that reparative therapy can be affective for some people. The video points out the study’s methodological flaws and exposes ex-gay leaders for misrepresenting the data.

JONAH: Jews Offering New Alternative to Homosexuality

<http://www.jonahweb.org/>

This non-profit organization offers information to Jewish people who want to be healed of their unwanted same-sex attractions. A number of articles written by rabbis are interesting.

NARTH: National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality

<http://www.narth.com/#>

This organization is dedicated to the study and treatment of homosexuals who seek to change their sexual attractions. It contains reports, research findings, conference summaries, NARTH news, and pictures of reparative therapy gurus like Nicolosi, Hallman, and Spitzer. Below are two recent NARTH publications.

Santinover, S. (2005). The Trojan couch: How the mental health guilds allow medical diagnostics, scientific research, and jurisprudence to be subverted in lockstep with political aims of their gay sub-components. NARTH Conference Reports. Retrieved January 1, 2007, from <http://www.narth.com/index.html>

This article analyzes the misinterpretation of the literature that claims homosexuality is a normal and incontrovertible trait.

Waller R., & Nicolosi, L. A. (2004, September 12). Spitzer study published: Evidence found for the effectiveness of reorientation therapy. What do Clinical Studies Say? . Retrieved January 1, 2007, from <http://www.narth.com/docs/evidencefound.html>

This article reports on Spitzer (2003, **JN**) who found reparative therapy to be effective for a group of men and women.

The following organizations and web sites espouse anti-reparative therapy philosophies.

The American Psychiatric Association Web site  
[http://www.psych.org/psych\\_prakkct/copptherapyaddendum83100.cfm](http://www.psych.org/psych_prakkct/copptherapyaddendum83100.cfm)

The American Psychological Association Web site  
<http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/publications/guidelines.html>

## MODULE 4: COMING OUT

### Introduction

JN = Journal, BK = Book, & WEB = Web site

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1967 police raided a gay club in Greenwich Village called the Stonewall Inn. Police harassed the clientele, roughed them up, and ejected them from the club. The crowd reacted with anger, and a riotous protest ensued that lasted three days. This watershed event triggered the gay rights movement. Gays and lesbians began to speak openly about homosexuality, beginning a national coming out process. The two documentary films Before Stonewall (Scagliotti & Schiller, 1999) and After Stonewall (Scagliotti, 1984) describe the riot and what life was like for gays and lesbian before and after.

Coming out is when someone publicly discloses his or her sexual-minority status. This process is well investigated. In one study, youth reported that they came out slowly and usually did not tell their parents first (D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1998, JN). Fathers were less accepting than mothers, but the majority of parents were tolerant or accepting. Youth reported feeling better about coming out, but some were verbally or physically abused as a result. Psychologists have proposed a number of stage theories to explain how the coming out process unfolds (Cass, 1984, JN; Coleman, 1982 JN; Meyer & Schwitzer, 1999 JN; Troiden, 1979, JN). Generally, the stages involve a period of denial, confusion, exploration, identification, and integration.

Experts in the field have recently challenged the stage theory approach (Floyd & Stein, 2002, JN; Savin-Williams, 2005, BK; Savin-Williams & Dubé, 1998, JN). They suggest that this model is outdated and that sexuality would be better understood if envisioned as having the potential to follow several different trajectories. Interestingly, many of today's teenagers are well adjusted and sometimes unwilling to classify their sexual feelings. A book of lesbian testimonials illustrates how ethnicity and socioeconomic status influence the identification process (Holmes, & Tust, 2002, BK). The feature film The Wedding Banquet (Lee, 1993) also examines ethnicity and The Incredible True Adventure of Two Girls in Love (Maggenti, 1995) looks at socioeconomic status.

Psychologists are also interested in how parents cope after a disclosure. Clinicians have described this event as an unsettling experience for most parents (Savin-Williams, 2005, BK; Savin-Williams & Dubé, 1998, JN) and one that is followed first by a stage of grieving. Subsequent stages are shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and then acceptance. However, the empirical evidence supporting these claims are weak. Savin-Williams and Dubé (1998, JN) suggest that family reactions are too distinct to be so predictable, and research indicates that many parents are not shocked or traumatized (D'Augelli et al., 1998, JN).

Clinicians (Eichberg, 1991, BK; Morrow, 2000, JN) and researchers (D'Augelli et al., 1998, JN; Floyd & Stein, 2002, JN; Savin-Williams, 2001, BK) offer advice on how to come out. Recommendations vary but most clinicians agree that disclosure should be planned, well timed, rehearsed, and nondefensive. Many support groups also offer help. The Human Rights Campaign

Foundation (n.d., **WEB**) for example, provides a number of innovative on-line resources and activities that assist people from all walks of life with the coming out process.

## Books

Eichberg, R. (1991). Coming out: An act of love. New York: Penguin Books.

The author, who is a clinical psychologist and has counseled many gay men and lesbians, provides a step-by-step guide to the coming out process.

“Part II: Coming Out Powerfully” is particularly useful as it instructs on how best to come out to different categories of people: family, friends, co-workers, community members.

Holmes, S., & Tust, J. (Eds.). (2002). Testimonies: A collection of lesbian coming-out stories. Los Angeles: Alyson.

This book presents 34 stories about the lesbian coming-out process. The following two stories describe two entirely different forms of coming out (early vs late).

“Overlooking the Obvious” by Lynn Kanter

A woman describes her coming out journey as a slow and evolving process that began when she was a preteen. She recounts with humor and pathos the time she came out to a crush, a straight friend, her parents, her grandmother, a boyfriend, a professor, her boss, a job candidate, and an elderly aunt. She concludes that coming out is never easy, never the same, and never completed.

“To Me, With Love” by Jenny Gafny-Watts

This is the coming out story of a married mother who developed sexual feelings towards women. Researchers have said that this trajectory (heterosexual marriage, parenthood, and then homosexuality) is quite common for lesbians but less so for gay men.

Savin-Williams, R. C. (2001). Mom, dad, I’m gay: How families negotiate coming out. Washington, DC: APA Books.

Savin-Williams reports that gay teenagers are coming out to their families much earlier, and those parents may find themselves unprepared. The book provides resources for such families. He bases his ideas on past research and on over 150 interviews with gay teens. Below is a list of questions that the book addresses:

- How do teens decide if they will come out to their parents?
- Are all coming out stories nightmares?
- What range of responses do parents exhibit in response to such a disclosure?
- What are some of the factors that influence different reactions?
- Is the coming out experience different for males and females and mothers and fathers?
- Are there tips on how to help parents with the coming out process?

Savin-Williams, R. C. (2005). The new gay teenager. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Savin-Williams asserts that gay teenagers are more diverse, more confident, and more complicated than their predecessors. The book urges researchers to change their way of thinking about gay teens because old images no longer apply.

#### Refusing Labels

Savin-Williams conducted many interviews with gay male and lesbian teens. He was surprised to find that many of them were unwilling to classify their sexual feelings.

#### Models or Trajectories?

Mental health professionals have long described gay teens as confused, conflicted, anxious, lonely, and at risk for suicide. Savin-Williams presents evidence that this is no longer true. Old models of homosexual development propose that gay teenagers struggle, tell their families, struggle some more, and eventually come out as gay. Savin-Williams suggests that this model is outdated and that sexuality would be better understood if envisioned as having the potential to follow several different trajectories.

## Articles

Buxton, A. P. (2006). When a spouse comes out: Impact on the heterosexual partner. Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 13, 317-332.

The impact of discovering one's spouse is gay is traumatic but little studied. This article discusses the mental health concerns, treatment needs, and adjustment stages of the heterosexual spouse. The article is important, as it will help clinicians treat families during this turbulent time.

Cass, V. C. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model. Journal of Sex Research, 20, 143-167.

Cass proposes that homosexual identity develops in five stages: identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, and identity pride. The theory, unlike others, has empirical support, which is why it is considered the best model.

Coleman, E. (1982). Developmental stages of the coming out process. Journal of Homosexuality, 7, 31-43.

Coleman proposes that homosexual identity develops in five stages. The stages are the pre-coming out stage, the coming out stage, the exploratory stage, the committed stage, and the integration stage. The authors also suggest future research ideas.

D'Augelli, A. R., Hershberger, S. L., & Pilkington, N. W. (1998). Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and their families: Disclosure of sexual orientation and its consequences. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 68, 361-371.

Gay youths discussed coming out to their parents. Parents were tolerant or accepting 70% of the time leaving 30% who were intolerant or rejecting. Youth reported feeling better about coming out but some also admitted that they had been verbally or physically abused by rejecting parents. The authors conclude that the process of disclosure is a complex one which needs further study.

Floyd, F. J., & Stein, T. S. (2002). Sexual orientation identity formation among gay, lesbian and bisexual youths: Multiple patterns of milestone. Journal of Research on Adolescence, 12, 167-191.

Researcher studied the coming out process in a group of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. Participants reported on when they first experienced same-sex attractions, identified as homosexual, came out to others, had homosexual sex, and made contact with the gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual community. Researchers identified five distinct patterns of development rather than stages. The article suggests that stage theories may not be the best way to understand the development of a homosexual identity.

LaSala, M. C. (2000). Lesbians, gay men, and their parents: Family therapy for the coming-out crisis. Family Process, *39*, 67-81.

According to LaSala, discovering that an offspring is gay often disrupts family equilibrium. The article focuses on therapeutic needs of such families. Case studies greatly augment the information provided. However, Savin-Williams (2005, **BK**) would not agree with LaSala's negative view or his use of the word "crisis" in the title.

Meyer, S., & Schwitzer, A. M. (1999). Stages of identity development among college students with minority sexual orientation. Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, *13*, 41-65.

Interviewers asked lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students about their homosexual identity. Results indicate that homosexual identity develops in six stages: feeling different, reflective observing, internalizing reflective observations, self-identifying, coming into proximity, and networking. The authors suggest ways that this theory can be used to treat and assist people as they adopt a homosexual identity.

Morrow, D. F. (2000). Coming out to families: Guidelines for intervention with gay and lesbian clients. Journal of Family Social Work, *5*, 53-66.

Social workers can help with the coming out process. The authors present 10 ways to assist: (a) gather a social history, (b) determine the level of homosexual identification, (c) help educate the client on gay and lesbian concerns, (d) assist in constructing a social network, (e) encourage rehearsal, (f) ascertain the level of family support, (g) select language to be used during disclosure, (h) choose the form of delivery, (i) pick an appropriate time for disclosure, and (j) help prepare the client for negative reactions.

Savin-Williams, R. C., & Dubé, E. M. (1998). Parental reactions to their child's disclosure of a gay/lesbian identity. Family Relations, *47*, 7-13.

The time after a child comes out to his or her parents has long been described as predictable and negative. This article challenges that assertion and suggests that family reactions are too distinct and varied to fit only one trajectory. The authors consider future research needs and implications for mental health workers. This article marks an important shift in thinking about how families adjust to having a LGB child.

Troiden, R. R. (1979). Becoming homosexual: A model of gay identity acquisition. Psychiatry: Journal of the Study of Interpersonal Processes, *42*, 362- 373.

Troiden proposes a four-stage model of the coming out process: sensitization or feeling different, dissociation or denial, coming out and acknowledgement, and commitment and acceptance. The article also compares this and other stage theories.

## Documentary Films

Scagliotti, J. (Director). (1999). After stonewall [Motion picture]. United States: First Run Features (88 min)

Stonewall was a gay club in the West Village of New York City in the 1960s. Although gay establishments were not illegal, police often cited them for alcohol violations and harassed the clientele. One night in June 1969, police raided this club, subjected patrons to homophobic comments, and threw them out. Violence and protests broke out on the street. This watershed event triggered the gay rights movement. Footage of the Stonewall riots is followed by an exposition of the political and cultural changes that ensued.

Scagliotti, J., & Schiller, G. (Directors). (1984). Before stonewall [Motion picture]. United States: First Run Features (87 min)

This movie explores historical highlights of life before the Stonewall riots. The filmmaker interviewed a number of pre-Stonewall gays and asked them about their lives, how they got together, and what coming out was like then. Archival footage brings this time period alive.

## Feature Films

SPOILER indicates that major plot twists or film endings are given away.

Fauré, C. (Director). (2000). Juste une question d'amour (Just a question of love) [Motion picture]. France: Picture This! ((88 min)

A young gay man, Laurent, hides his homosexuality by allowing people to believe that his best friend is his girlfriend. Then he meets and falls in love with Cedric, a gay man who is very proud of his sexual orientation and whose mother is equally accepting.

Teaching Topic: Closet Issues

In the middle of the movie Cedric tells Laurent that he must “come out” or their relationship is over. This source of conflict is common in gay relationships.

Teaching Topic: Family Response

Later Laurent tries to explain his reticence to Cedric. Laurent had a gay cousin who came out to his parents and was thrown out of the house. The cousin contracted AIDS and died alone.

Lee, A. (Director). (1993). Hsi yen (The wedding banquet) [Motion picture]. Taiwan: MGM (106 min)

Wei-Tung, a gay Chinese-American man, lives in New York City with his lover Simon. Under parental pressure to marry a woman, he stages a mock wedding with one of his female friends. This movie is a good vehicle for learning about Asian views on homosexuality.

Maggenti, M. (Director). (1995). The incredibly true adventure of two girls in love [Motion picture]. United States: Fine Line Features (94 min)

This comedy traces the romance between Randy a lower class white girl and Evie an upper class black girl.

Shore, S. (Director). (1998) Get real [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount (110 min)  
SPOILER

This sweet film depicts a gay prep school boy named Steven. He falls in love with a popular soccer player named John. The surprising plot twist is that John falls reluctantly but deeply in love with Stephen too.

Teaching Topic: Much to Lose

John has much to lose as he plans to attend Oxford and marry. The same-sex attractions he feels lead him to the brink of a breakdown. The pressure to be straight can be intense.

Wheeler, A. (Director). (1999). Better than chocolate [Motion picture]. United States: Trimark Pictures (101 min)

Two young women, Maggie and Kim, fall in love and decide to live together. Then, Maggie's mother calls and says that she is moving in. During the rest of the movie Maggie tries to juggle these relationships and hide that she is a lesbian.

Teaching Topic: Denial

Maggie's mother has been oblivious to the many signs that her daughter is gay. The film shows that many parents are in denial about their child's sexual orientation.

## Web Sites

Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation: Working for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equal rights.

[http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Coming\\_Out](http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Coming_Out)

The HRC Coming Out Project is a program designed to help gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people come out. Below are a number of interesting links.

Ask the Experts

[http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Ask\\_the\\_Experts&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=31&ContentID=10581](http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Ask_the_Experts&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=31&ContentID=10581)

Readers can ask experts questions about coming out and get replies.

Guided Conversations

<http://anon.newmediamill.speedera.net/anon.newmediamill/tom/conversation/index.html>

Visitors can click a screen that asks them what LBGT topic they would like to discuss (gay marriage, hate crimes, workplace discrimination, coming out, or transgender issues) and with whom. The screen then provides a conversation script and suggests positive answers to negative responses. This is an ingenious way to help people talk about difficult issues.

Research Guide to Coming Out

[http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Get\\_Informed4&CONTENTID=32673&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm](http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Get_Informed4&CONTENTID=32673&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm)

This guide offers education on coming out to self, making a coming out plan, telling family members, and the coming out continuum.

Talking About it

[http://www.hrc.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Coming\\_Out/Get\\_Informed4/Talking\\_About\\_It/Talking\\_About\\_It\\_Podcast.htm](http://www.hrc.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Coming_Out/Get_Informed4/Talking_About_It/Talking_About_It_Podcast.htm)

This is a monthly pod cast of conversations with openly gay celebrities. One interesting interview is with George Takei (best known for his role as Lt. Sulu, on Star Trek) who came out in October 2005 in an interview with Frontiers Magazine.

Lesbian Area: Coming Out

[http://www.lesbian-world.net/tips\\_come\\_out.html](http://www.lesbian-world.net/tips_come_out.html)

The Lesbian Area web site offers coming out tips for lesbians, which I list below. It should be noted however, that recommendations by support groups can be wrong because they are not always based on empirical evidence. Case in point, this site states that coming out causes parents to be sickened and distressed, but current research has debunked that notion. Class discussions can focus on informational accuracy.

- Be sure of your sexual orientation before coming out.
- Pick the appropriate time to come out.
- Never come out during an argument.
- Expect your parents to be sickened and distressed.
- Once you come out you should behave exactly how you did before disclosure.
- You should stress that you are the same person.
- You should be knowledgeable about gay and lesbian culture and issues.
- Expect that it will take others a while to adjust.
- The decision to come out should only be made by you.
- Introduce your parents to families who have accepted their child's homosexuality.

## MODULE 5: TRANSGENDER ISSUES

### Introduction

**JN** = Journal, **BK** = Book, & **WEB** = Web site

Transgender is a broad term used to describe people who traverse gender-role boundaries (Lev, 2004, **BK**). Drag queens, drag kings, cross-dressers, genderqueers, and transsexuals all belong to this category (Glossary of LGBT Terms, n.d.). Drag queens are generally gay men who dress and perform as women, as seen in the feature film The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (Elliot, 1994). Drag kings are generally lesbians who dress and perform as men, as is vividly depicted in the documentary The Aggressives (Peddle, 2005). The majority of cross-dressers on the other hand are male, heterosexual, and married and some of these marriages do stay intact (Boyd, 2003, **BK**). Genderqueers do not identify as male or female.

Transsexuals believe that their gender identity does not fit their birth sex. These beliefs generally begin in childhood, and individuals commonly attempt to repress them (Lev, 2004, **BK**). Adult transsexuals use a variety of tactics to hide their transsexuality such as marrying, having children, seeking refuge in the gay community (Greene, 2000, in Stryker & Whittle, 2006, **BK**). Men who want to be women are called MTFs (male-to-females) and women who desire to be men are FTMs (female-to-males). The documentary Georgie Girl (Wells & Goldson, 2002) tells the story of a MTF who is now an elected member of the New Zealand parliament, and the documentary film Southern Comfort (Davis, 2001) tells the equally fascinating story of a FTM who is dying of cervical cancer.

Christine Jorgensen became famous in the 1950s for being one of the first men to undergo a sex-change operation. Shortly after that, Harry Benjamin became an advocate for transsexuals and actively promoted the use of surgery and hormones (Lev, 2004, **BK**). Medical treatments are readily available today and provide relief for many but they are expensive and potentially dangerous (Greene, 2000, in Stryker & Whittle, 2006, **BK**). Access to surgical treatment is often not available without a therapist's referral, which casts the clinician in the role of gatekeeper, a practice that encourages transsexuals to be deceptive (Speer & Parsons, 2006, **JN**). Most postoperative transsexuals are very happy with their results but 1% has regrets (Lawrence, 2003, **JN**; Olsson & Möller, 2006, **JN**). Disappointment is usually associated with poor surgical outcomes or preexisting mental illness.

Transgender activists' have recently affected a paradigm shift that promotes more openness, acceptance, and visibility (Carroll, Gilroy, & Ryan, 2002, **JN**). They reject the surgical approach because it suggests pathology and promotes an obsession with being gender perfect. Therapists are now being encouraged to learn more about transgender issues and to adopt a transsexual affirmative therapeutic approach. These efforts have generated many transsexual support groups like FTM International (n.d., **WEB**) and Gender Education and Advocacy (n.d., **WEB**).

Researchers are now more interested in studying the lives of transsexuals than they are in isolating the causes or best treatments. For example, psychologists have developed stage theories that describe the formation of a transsexual identity (Devore, 2004, **JN**; Lev, 2004, **BK**), and research has also uncovered some interesting information about femininity, masculinity,

sexuality, and sex roles in transsexuals (Daskalos, 1998, **JN**; Wolfradt & Neumann, 2001, **JN**). It is clear that more work needs to be done.

## Books

Bailey, J. M. (2003). The man who would be queen: The science of gender-bending and transsexualism. Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press.

Bailey is a psychologist at Northwestern University whose book explores the origins of homosexuality and transsexuality. One of his major tenets is that both proclivities have a strong biological basis. When this book came out, transsexual activists and the scientific community denounced it. He was accused of manipulating data and using participants unethically. He was investigated by his university, discredited, and stepped down as chair of the psychology department.

“Chapter 9: Men Trapped in Men’s Bodies”

The Blanchard, Bailey, and Lawrence theory of transsexuality is the focus of this chapter. The theory claims that there are two types of MTFs who wish to transition: homosexual transsexuals who want to be women and are attracted to males exclusively and autogynephilic transsexuals who exhibit a paraphilia in which they are sexually attracted to the thought or image of themselves as women. This chapter does an excellent job of outlining these differences but it is a distinction that not everyone believes exists.

Boyd, H. (2003). My husband Betty: Love, sex, and life with a crossdresser. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press.

A woman who is married to a male cross-dresser writes this book. It provides a wealth of resources including case studies, a history of transgender science, interviews, a glossary, and discussions. It is a quick read that offers some interesting insights.

Lev, A. I. (2004). Transgender emergence: Therapeutic guidelines for working with gender-variant people and their families. New York: The Haworth Clinical Practice Press.

This is one of the few books to describe the mental health needs of transgendered individuals and their families. The section, “Treatment Issues,” is particularly useful. Lev describes five coming out stages (awareness, information, disclosure, exploration, transition, and integration) and the therapeutic goals associated with each.

Stryker, S., & Whittle, S. (Eds.). (2006). The transgender studies reader. New York: Routledge.

This anthology of essays is dedicated to transgendered studies. The approach is interdisciplinary taking from the social sciences, feminist theory, the life sciences, the humanities, and the arts. Three particularly good essays are the following:

“Look! No, Don’t! The Visibility Dilemma for Transsexual Men,” by Jamison Green (2000).

Green is a world-renowned FTM activist. He points out that the issue of “passing” (being a transsexual but going undetected) is very important to most transsexuals. Green, however,

sees it as his job to be a “visible man” and come out of the transsexual closet so that people will eventually become more comfortable with transgendered people. This provocative essay can inspire good class discussion.

“Manliness,” by Patrick Califia (1997).

Califia is a psychotherapist who describes himself as a bisexual sadomasochistic tranny man (FTM). In this article, he discusses the concept of masculinity and how it does not describe him because he was a woman for 45 years. Instead, he coins the term feminize masculinity and offers readers permission to stretch their thinking about gender and social construction.

“Transsexuals in the Military: Flight into Hypermasculinity,” by George R. Brown (1988). This reading was first published in the Archives of Sexual Behavior. Brown was an Air Force psychiatrist who saw 11 patients with gender dysphoria over the course of 3 years (a higher incidence than normal). Brown’s thesis is that MTF transsexuals enter the military as a way to avoid their struggles with transsexualism. This article provides two case studies.

## Articles

Carroll, L., Gilroy, P. J., & Ryan, J. (2002). Counseling transgendered, transsexual, and gender-variant clients. Journal of Counseling & Development, 80, 131-138.

Transsexual activists have recently proclaimed that transsexuals should be visible and embrace their transsexuality. They think that unless people get to know transsexuals, they will continue to fear them. This shift in attitude has implications for those who counsel them. Therapists need to learn about transgender culture and issues. Carroll, Gilroy, and Ryan suggest ways that therapists can achieve these goals and provide relevant case study information. The article is important as it introduces the transsexual affirmative approach.

Daskalos, C. T. (1998). Changes in the sexual orientation of six heterosexual male-to-female transsexuals. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 27, 605-614.

Psychologists have assumed that changing one's sex does not change sexual orientation. Researchers conducted interviews with 20 transsexuals (both FTM and MTF) to determine if this assumption is true. Six MTF transsexuals stated that they had been sexually attracted to women before their change but their attraction shifted to men after. Psychologists need to reconsider the prevailing assumption of no change.

Devor, A. H. (2004). Witnessing and mirroring: A fourteen-stage model of transsexual identity formation. Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy, 8, 41-67.

Devor presents a 14-stage coming out process for transsexuals. These stages include (1) gender discomfort, (2) confusion about assigned gender, (3) looking for other gender identities, (4) introduction to transsexuality, (5) confusion about transsexuality, (6) testing transsexual identity, (7) tolerance of transsexuality, (8) delay of acceptance, (9) acceptance of transsexual identity, (10) transsexual identity strengthens, (11) transition, (12) acceptance post-transition, (13) transsexuality mostly invisible, and (14) pride

Jo, B. (2005). Lesbian community: From sisterhood to segregation. Journal of Lesbian Studies, 9, 135-143.

The feminist community and female-only spaces were important to lesbians in the 1970s. Jo bemoans that this community has now been diminished by the acceptance of MTF transsexuals. The inclusion or exclusion of MTFs in female groups is an on-going and heated debate amongst feminists and lesbians.

Lawrence, A. A. (2003). Factors associated with satisfaction or regret following male-to-female sex reassignment surgery. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32, 299-315.

Factors related to happiness or disappointment following sexual reassignment surgery was the focus of this research. Most patients were extremely happy with the surgery and their new lives. A few reported some regret but most of these were associated with poor surgical outcomes. It is important to learn that regrets do occur and why.

Olsson, S-E., & Möller, A. (2006). Regret after sex reassignment surgery in a male-to-female transsexual: A long-term follow-up. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 35, 501-506.

A case report presents the story of a gender dysphoric man with a long history of other mental disorders. This client had sexual reassignment surgery at the age of 35 but regretted it immensely. She reported being depressed, anxious, and confused. Strangely, when he was a man he had preferred to dress as a woman but when she became a woman she preferred to dress like a man. These results provide further evidence that transsexuals need to undergo psychiatric screening before surgery.

Speer, S. A., & Parsons, C. (2006). Gatekeeping gender: Some features of the use of hypothetical questions in the psychiatric assessment of transsexual patients. Discourse & Society, 17, 785-812.

Therapists who assess the psychological health of transsexual clients and then grant or deny them access to surgery and hormones employ what is called the gatekeeper approach. This dynamic often results in an adversarial atmosphere, which is not conducive to the therapeutic process. The first part of this article provides an excellent history of this treatment approach and its pitfalls.

Wolfradt, U., & Neumann, K. (2001). Depersonalization, self-esteem and body image in male-to-female transsexuals compared to male and female controls. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 30, 301-310.

MTF transsexuals and female and male controls completed surveys that measured self-esteem, gender identity, sex-roles, and body image. What is fascinating is that these transsexuals, who were once men but now live as women, had the self-esteem and body image of men. However, these same transsexuals rated themselves on sex-role scales as more feminine than men and on par with women. These results highlight the blending of gender characteristics that is common to the transgendered experience.

## Documentary Films

Davis, K. (Director). (2001). Southern comfort [Motion picture]. United states: New Line Group 90 (min)

Robert Eads is a FTM transsexual who is dying of cervical cancer. He has a girlfriend Lola Cola (a MTF transsexual) and an adopted transsexual family. They help each other carve out a comfortable life as transsexuals living in the conservative rural south.

Teaching Topic: Robert's son comes to visit.

During an interview, his son stumbles over his pronouns when referring to Robert and calls him Mom. This moniker is technically correct but seems awkward and unsuitable. The son explains how friends advised him to claim his mother was dead and that Robert was his stepfather. The son eschewed this suggestion. This illustrates the dilemmas and pressures associated with having a transsexual family member.

Teaching Topic: Top Surgery

Robert and his friends discuss their mastectomies. Each surgical procedure left their recipient with a disfiguring result that was attributed to discrimination and lack of respect from surgeons and other medical personnel.

Teaching Topic: Robert was denied medical treatment.

More than one hospice care center turns Robert away because of his condition. Sadly, this denial of treatment is not an uncommon experience.

McLachlan, D. (Director). (2004). M2F: A journey in gender identity [Motion picture].

(Available from Pangaea Films Marketing, Patricia Church, P. O. Box 494, Chelsea VIC 3196, Australia) (52 min)

This is a compassionate documentary about MTF transsexuals and their life experiences. The "Life Stories" (in the extras) are well suited for teaching students about transsexuality. I briefly review four of these stories:

### A Message of Caution

Alan presented to a doctor as a transsexual at the age of 19 and had genital surgery at the age of 21. However, once the surgery was done, Alan regretted his decision. Alan tried to live as a woman for almost 10 years but it was never a good fit. Regrets are uncommon but they do occur.

### Following My Own Compass

In this clip viewers meet Sarah, a captain in the Australian Navy who once was a man. She discusses the support she got from the Navy and the difficulties faced by her family. Sarah does not pass well as a woman. Watching Sarah can lead to conversations about the issue of passing or "going underground."

### The Partner's Perspective

This is an interview with a woman whose husband became a woman. She discusses the difficulties she and her children experienced after she lost her husband and they lost their father. She decided to stay with her husband. Does this make her a lesbian?

Tracy and Andrea

This is the story of two MTF individuals who struggled, had sex change operations, and then met and fell in love. The case challenges the assumption that all MTFs desire to fall in love with and marry heterosexual men.

Peddle, D. (Director). (2005). The aggressives [Motion picture]. United States: Image Entertainment (73 min)

This film is about lesbians of color who favor looking and acting like men and who also take part in the New York City drag ball scene. Many of these women make very convincing men.

Teaching Topic: Become men?

All of the women in this film exert a great deal of effort to look and act like men but none of them claims to be or want to be a man. This fact could lead to a good discussion about the differences between transsexuals and cross-dressers.

Teaching Topic: Moms

Two mothers express their hopes that their lesbian daughters are just going through a phase. This is a common reaction of family members when a child first comes out to them.

Wells, P., & Goldson, A. (Directors). (2002). Georgie girl [Television broadcast]. New York: PBS: POV (69 min)

This film portrays the life of Georgina Beyer, a MTF transsexual and former prostitute who is now an elected member of the New Zealand parliament. She openly discusses her life and her fight to educate people.

Zolten, S. (Director). (2001). Just call me Kade [Motion picture]. (Available from Youth Media Distribution, 104 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10011)

Kade Collins is a FTM teenager. Kade's parents support his decision to transition but the journey is not an easy one. Kade and his family allowed their story to be documented in order to educate people about transsexualism. It is a moving story of family struggle and love.

Teaching Topic: Kade takes hormones at the age of 14

At 14 Kade began getting monthly injections of Lupron in order to halt the effects of puberty. Some doctors, like Kade's, think that hormones should be taken early so that the secondary sexual characteristics of their biological sex (like breasts for FTMs and facial hair for MTFs) fail to develop, which then makes it easier for the transsexual to pass. Other doctors think it dangerous to give such powerful hormones to young people who are still in

the process of developing.

## Feature Films

SPOILER (indicates that major plot twists or film endings are given away)

Berliner, A. (Director). (1997). Ma vie en rose (My life in pink) [Motion picture]. France: Haut et Court (88 min)

Ludovic, a transsexual boy, dresses like a girl, acts like a girl, and expresses the desire to find a husband. His family and neighbors are forced to deal with their discomfort.

Teaching Topic: The Party

In a particularly moving scene, Ludovic comes to a neighborhood party in a dress, frilly socks, shiny shoes, jewelry, and makeup. This scene provides an excellent opportunity for viewers to talk about how they would react.

Teaching Topic: Ludovic is steadfast.

Ludovic is only 7 years old but he is steadfast about his desires and undeterred by the fact that the adults in his life are so opposed to his claims of being a girl.

Elliot, S. (Director). (1994). The adventures of Priscilla, queen of the desert [Motion picture]. Australia: Polygram Filmed Entertainment (103 min)

SPOILER

This is an Australian road film about two drag queens, Felicia and Mitzi, and a transsexual woman, Bernadette. While sporting beautiful frocks, they drive across the outback to a nightclub gig and do so to the accompaniment of Abba. It is both touching and humorous.

Teaching Topic: Drag Queens & Transsexuals

This film clearly shows the difference between drag queens and transsexuals and it covers other topics like family acceptance and the “how to make boys look more like girls” industry.

Teaching Topic: Flirting with Danger

When Felicia goes out on the town, she narrowly escapes being beaten. This is an all too common occurrence.

Tucker, D. (Director). (2005). Transamerica [Motion picture]. United States: Weinstein Company (103 min).

This is the story of Bree Daniels, a preoperative MTF transsexual who suddenly discovers that she has a son. The plot revolves around her trying to form a relationship with the boy and coming out to him at the same time.

Teaching Moment: Surgeries

Bree had a larynx shave, demaculinizing facial surgery, and lessons to feminize her voice. All that is left is the “bottom surgery.” This illustrates the lengths that some transsexuals will go to make their body fit their psychological gender.

Teaching Topic: A Signature

Bree begs her therapist to sign the release form so she can have the genital surgery. The therapist insists that Bree meet her son first. This practice casts the clinician in the role of gatekeeper, which critics claim encourages transsexuals to be deceptive.

## Web Sites

FTM International  
<http://www.ftmi.org/>

This is the largest and oldest association for FTM people. This site is notable because MTFs get so much more press than do FTMs. The reason for this disparity would make for interesting classroom discussion.

Gender Education and Advocacy  
<http://www.gender.org/resources/files.html#gvm>

The site provides downloadable material designed to educate people about transgender issues.

HBIGDA 'Standards of Care' (Version 6, 2001)  
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/node/634>

The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (HBIGDA) wrote these standards of care for transsexuals to meet their interpersonal, psychological, and medical needs.

International Journal of Transgenderism  
<http://www.symposion.com/ijt/index.html>

This online, peer reviewed electronic journal about transsexualism is sponsored by the Harry Benjamin Gender Dysphoria Association (HBIGDA). Two examples of articles are provided below.

De Sutter P., Kira, K., Verschoor, A., & Hotimsky A. (2002). The desire to have children and the preservation of fertility in transsexual women: A survey. *IJT*, 6(3). Retrieved January 1, 2007, from [http://www.symposion.com/ijt/ijtvo06no03\\_02.htm](http://www.symposion.com/ijt/ijtvo06no03_02.htm)

This interesting article reports on postoperative MTF individuals who expressed their opinions about preserving sperm before undergoing genital surgery. A large majority was in favor of this option.

Ringo, P. (2002). Media roles in female-to-male transsexual and transgender identity formation. *IJT*, 6(3). Retrieved January 1, 2007, from [http://www.symposion.com/ijt/ijtvo06no03\\_01.htm](http://www.symposion.com/ijt/ijtvo06no03_01.htm)

Ringo's experiment found that exposure to transgender information in the media fostered positive identity development in FTMs.

## MODULE 6: INTERSEXUALITY

### Introduction

**JN** = Journal, **BK** = Book, & **WEB** = Web site

Intersexuality is a term used to describe a person whose genetic sex, sexual organs, and secondary sexual characteristics do not match. Approximately one out of 2,000 babies is born with ambiguous genitalia (Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin, 2003, **BK**). Such a birth often leads to panic, confusion, and a desire to fix things. About 90% of intersex infants undergo feminizing surgery during which an artificial vagina is constructed (Chase, 1998, in Stryker & Whittle, 2006, **BK**). Some contend that the procedure is heterosexist, androcentric, and phallogocentric (Kessler, 2002, **BK**). Surgical complications are common, sexual sensation is sometimes lost, life-long hormone replacement therapy is often required, and some doctors advise that the child not be told. On top of that surgical and psychological reassignment does not always lead to a predictable shift in gender identity (Reiner & Gearhart, 2004, **JN**).

Many of the first surgically altered intersex people are now adults. In the documentary film Hermaphrodites Speak (Chase, 2007) eight intersex people tell their life stories, and their anger and suffering is palpable. The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA; n.d., **WEB**) and world-renowned academics (Creighton & Minto, 2001, **JN**; Diamond, & Sigmundson, 1997, **JN**; Dreger, 1999, **BK**) demand an end to this practice. They recommend that surgical reassignment be deferred and full disclosure given (Diamond, & Sigmundson, 1997; **JN**; ISNA, n.d., **WEB**) but not everyone agrees (Meyer-Bahburg et al., 2004, **JN**).

Researchers can better understand the role that genetics, hormones, and environment have on gender role, gender identity, and sexuality by studying people with a variety of intersex conditions. For example, congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) occurs when the adrenal glands of genetic females overproduce androgens, causing the genitals to be masculinized (Cohen-Kettenis & Pfäfflin, 2003, **BK**). CAH girls often prefer masculine forms of play and dress and are more prone to gender dysphoria than controls. Androgen insensitivity syndrome (AIS) is another disorder in which androgen receptors are unresponsive to the presence of androgens, causing males to appear female. Genetic males with AIS are the same as genetic females with respect to gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation (Hines, Ahmed, & Hughes, 2003; **JN**). Intersex conditions are living laboratories that provide an invaluable look at the complexity of gender.

The story of David Reimer, an accidental case of intersexuality, also sheds light on gender role and identity. David lost his penis during a routine circumcision (Colapinto, 2000, **BK**). Surgeons performed feminizing genital surgery and instructed his parents to raise him as a girl and keep his history secret. Observers described David's behavior and interests as masculine, and he never identified as female. As a teenager he discovered the truth and changed back to male. Sadly, David took his own life at the age of 38. Doctors heralded these results as evidence that gender identity and gender role are biologically determined but in an almost identical case the accident victim positively identified as a bisexual female (Bradley, Oliver, Chernick, & Zucker, 1998, **JN**).

## Books

Colapinto, J. (2000). As nature made him: The boy who was raised as a girl. New York: Harper Collins.

This book is the biography of a man with an identical twin. At 6 months the twins developed a urinary problem and doctors recommended circumcision. At 8 months both boys entered a hospital to undergo the surgery. However, there was an accident and the penis of one twin, Bruce, was amputated. The second twin's procedure was subsequently canceled. The parents consulted a well-known sex researcher, John Money. He suggested that Bruce have surgery to turn him into a girl, Brenda. For years, Money proclaimed that this experiment was a great success and that Brenda was growing up to be a well-adjusted female. This was far from the truth.

Colapinto wrote a moving eulogy after David Reimer's suicide, which can be read at the following web site. <http://www.slate.com/id/2101678/>

Cohen-Kettenis, P. T., & Pfäfflin, F. (2003). Transgenderism and intersexuality in childhood and adolescence: Making choices. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

This book is a clinically oriented examination of transsexual and intersexual conditions in children and teens written by a clinical psychologist and a psychiatrist. It provides vignettes to illustrate the conditions being discussed.

“Chapter 3: Atypical Sexual Differentiation”

The chapter explains several forms of atypical sexual differentiation or intersexuality. It comes with pictures and case studies, which will help the reader understand complicated disorders like congenital adrenal hyperplasia and androgen insensitivity syndrome. This chapter also includes information about the gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation associated with each disorder.

“Chapter 5: Atypical Development of Gender Identity and Gender Role”

The chapter outlines how doctors should manage intersex conditions. The authors acknowledge that medical and psychological interventions are necessary.

Dreger, A. D. (Ed.). (1999). Intersex in the age of ethics. Frederick, MD: University Publishing Group.

Essays in the text focus on the ethics involved when treating intersex people. The writings address this issue from personal, ethical, clinical, legal, anthropological, historical, sociological, and philosophical perspectives.

“A Mother's Care,” by Alice Dumont Dreger and Cheryl Chase

This essay comes from an interview with an adult intersexed woman (Sue) and her mother (Margaret). When Sue was born with an enlarged clitoris, doctors told Margaret that

surgery (to make Sue a “true” female) was imperative and the sooner the better. Margaret did considerable reading and decided not to go ahead with the surgery. The two women discuss this decision.

“Silence = Death,” by Tamara Alexander

Tamara writes this essay about her lesbian partner Judy. As their relationship progressed Tamara sensed that something stood between them. Eventually Judy divulged that she was born with an intersex condition. The rest of the essay is about how they fell in love and struggled to cope with Judy’s gender ambiguity.

Kessler, S. K. (2002). Lessons from the intersexed. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

The book explores the concept of intersexuality from a medical, surgical, cultural, feminist, familial, and personal perspective (all of which are in conflict with each other at some time or another). The book criticizes preexisting standards for the treatment and management of intersexed individuals and calls for reform.

“Chapter 6: Rethinking Genitals and Gender”

The main recommendation for treating intersexed females is vaginoplasty, a procedure to construct or reconstruct a vagina so that it looks and functions normally. This chapter is most thought provoking in its contention that the recommendation stems from a heterosexist, androcentric, and phallogocentric society. The chapter also posits three genders: male, female and intersex.

Stryker, S., & Whittle, S. (Eds.). (2006). The transgender studies reader. New York: Routledge.

“Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism,” by Cheryl Chase

The author is founder and current director of the Intersex Society of North America (<http://www.isna.org/>). She was a genetic male born with ambiguous genitalia. She was raised as a boy until 1.5 years old. Then she had sexual reassignment surgery and was raised as a girl. She advocates that intersex children should be raised as one specific gender but not have the surgery until they are old enough to make that decision themselves.

## Articles

Bradley, S. J., Oliver, G. D., Chernick, A. B., & Zucker, K. J. (1998). Experiment of nurture: Ablatio penis at 2 months, sex reassignment at 7 months and a psychosexual follow-up in young adulthood. *Pediatrics*, *102*, e9. Retrieved May, 2007 from [www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/102/1/e9](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/102/1/e9)

A baby boy had his penis accidentally severed during a routine circumcision. Doctors performed sexual-reassignment surgery and instructed his parents to raise him as a girl. As an adult she positively identified as a bisexual female. This stands in direct contrast to David Reimer (see Colapinto, 2000, **BK**) who was victim of a similar accident but never identified as female and eventually reverted back to being male. The authors suggest that these differences occurred because the first individual changed sexes at a much earlier age (7 months vs. 17 months) and the mother was more accepting of the change.

Creighton, S., & Minto, C. (2001). Managing intersex: Most vaginal surgery in childhood should be deferred (Editorial). *British Medical Journal*, *323*, 1264-1265.

Doctors have a decision to make when a child is born intersexed. Is it a boy or is it a girl? Typically they assign a gender, suggest surgical and hormonal treatments, and some advise parents to keep all of this a secret. Creighton and Minto charge that this practice is unethical because the child has no choice and surgery can have complications and damage sexual sensitivity. Recommendations are to defer surgery.

Diamond, M., & Sigmundson, H. K. (1997). Management of intersexuality. Guidelines for dealing with persons with ambiguous genitalia . *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, *151*, 1046-1050.

Diamond and Sigmundson list 25 guidelines for treating children with intersex conditions. Deferral of surgery, offering support or counseling, and full disclosure are perhaps the three most important. The article also provides an excellent list of intersex support groups and counselors.

Dreger, A. D., Chase, C., Sousa, A., Gruppuso, P. A., & Frader, J. (2005). Changing the nomenclature/taxonomy for intersex: A scientific and clinical rationale. *Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology & Metabolism*, *18*, 729-733.

Intersex people have traditionally been classified as hermaphrodites. The authors argue that the term is outdated and disingenuous. They urge that practitioners abandon the classification and suggest an alternative. Recommendations like these are a direct outgrowth of intersex activists two of whom (Dreger and Chase) are authors of this article.

Gooren, L., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (1991). Development of male gender identity/role and a sexual orientation towards women in a 46, XY subject with an incomplete form of the androgen insensitivity syndrome. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *20*, 459-470.

IASI is a disorder in which androgen receptors only weakly respond to the presence of androgens causing genetic males to appear feminized at birth. This article presents a case study of a person with this disorder. Her parents raised her as a girl but she identified as a heterosexual male and requested sexual-reassignment surgery at the age of 30. This case is intriguing as it demonstrates that male gender identity and a heterosexual orientation can develop even when androgen levels are suboptimal.

Hines, M., Ahmed, S. F., & Hughes, I. A. (2003). Psychological outcomes and gender-related development in complete androgen insensitivity syndrome. Archives of Sexual Behavior, *32*, 93-101.

CASI is a disorder in which androgen receptors are completely unresponsive to the presence of androgens, causing genetic males to appear female. Hines, Ahmed, and Hughes ascertained the gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation of 20 CASI women and compared their findings to matched controls. The two groups of women did not differ, which shows that male gender role and gender identity are completely dependent on the presence of androgens.

Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F. L., Migeon, C. J., Berkovitz, G. D., Gearhart, J. P., Dolezal, C., & Wisniewski, A. B. (2004). Attitudes of adult 46, XY intersex persons to clinical management policies. Journal of Urology, *171*, 1615-1619.

Interviewers asked a group of intersex people who had undergone sexual-reassignment surgery about their results. They were satisfied with their assigned gender and surgery and thought it unwise to delay surgery. These findings are of interest because they run contrary to claims made by many intersex advocacy groups.

Reiner, W. G., & Gearhart, J. P. (2004). Discordant sexual identity in some genetic males with cloacal exstrophy assigned to female sex at birth. New England Journal of Medicine, *350*, 333-341.

This study focused on 16 genetic male children with an intersex condition. Fourteen had sexual-reassignment surgery and were raised as girls but the other two declined treatment. The two untreated males identified as male but so did more than half of those reassigned. Surgical and psychological reassignment does not always lead to a parallel shift in gender identity. These results indicate a need to reconsider standard forms of treatment.

## Documentary Films

Chase, C. (Director). (1997). Hermaphrodites speak! [Motion picture]. (Available from Intersex Society of North America, 979 Golf Course Drive # 282, Rohnert, CA 94928 (30 min)

This documentary introduces viewers to several intersex people and the physicians who treat them.

Teaching Topic: Anger

The viewer meets eight intersex individuals who have had corrective genital surgery as babies. For many, the surgery came with numerous complications and also rendered them unable to orgasm. The intersex people in this film clearly feel violated and their anger is palpable.

Teaching Topic: Binary Challenge

Society teaches that gender is a binary concept: a person is either male or female. The people in this film challenge this notion suggesting that there is a third sex.

Chase, C. (Director). (2003). The child with an intersex condition: Total patient care [Motion picture]. (Available from Intersex Society of North America, 979 Golf Course Drive # 282, Rohnert, CA 94928 (20 min)

This movie was made for physicians and psychologists who may encounter patients with an intersex condition. The film is intended for practitioners but nonclinicians can easily understand it as well.

Thomas, A. (2005). (Director). Middle sexes: Redefining he and she [TV broadcast]. New York: HBO (75 mins)

In an HBO documentary about people whose gender, anatomy, and/or behavior are not congruent, one section is about an intersex person.

Teaching Topic: Blurred Lines

This clip is about a lesbian couple Tamara and Judy. Judy (an intersex person) is now living as a man named Max. Tamara discusses how this change was a challenge to her lesbian identity. Does this mean that Tamara is straight? This same couple was described in the essay entitled "Silence = Death," by Tamara Alexander (Dreger, 1999, **BK**).

### Feature Films

SPOILER indicates that major plot twists or film endings are given away.

Barcellos, L. (Director). (2005). Both [Motion picture]. United States: Soloris Films (86 min)

SPOILER

Rebeca's parents have shrouded her past in secrecy. She then discovers a photo album with pictures of her parents and brother but none of herself. She vows to unravel the web of secrets and lies spun by those around her. Through her battle to discover the truth, she learns that she is intersexual.

## Web Sites

### Intersex Initiative

<http://intersexinitiative.org/index.html>

The Intersex Initiative is an advocacy organization for people who are born intersexed. It provides links, essays, documents, projects, information, and resources. Below are the titles of two recent essays.

Koyama, E. Is gender identity disorder an intersex condition? Intersex Initiative. Retrieved January 1, 2007, from <http://intersexinitiative.org/articles/gid.html>

The author argues that gender identity disorder is not an intersex condition.

Koyama, E. Medical abuse of intersex children and child sexual abuse. Intersex Initiative. Retrieved January 1, 2007, from <http://intersexinitiative.org/articles/medicalabuse.html>

This essay makes a case that genital reassignment surgery is a high-tech form of genital mutilation and the parading of such children in front of interns, nurses, and doctors is a form of sexual abuse.

### Intersex Society of North America (ISNA)

<http://www.isna.org/>

The Intersex Society of America, founded by Cheryl Chase, is an association dedicated to the concerns of all people born with bodies that are neither male nor female. This site has two goals: to teach people about intersexuality and to advocate that early genital surgery be put off until age of consent. The site offers bibliographies, videos, articles, brochures, historical accounts, legal information, and support.

Of particular interest are recommendations for a patient-centered approach to the treatment of intersexed children. <http://www.isna.org/node/138>

- Intersexed children and their families should be treated in a truthful and sympathetic manner.
- These families should be offered psychological services to help deal with the distress often associated with such a diagnosis.
- These families should also be connected with other people dealing with intersexuality so that they can give each other support.
- Following tests, intersex infants should be given a “psychological” gender assignment, but not a surgical gender assignment.
- Medical procedures should be performed only as necessary.
- Genital reconstructive surgery should not be done until the intersex person is able to make the decision for himself or herself. Prior to surgery, patients should be put in touch with people who have opted to have the surgery and others who did not.

## MODULE 7: GAY MALE and LESBIAN FAMILIES

### Introduction

JN = Journal, BK = Book, & WEB = Web site

The United States is in the midst of a gay baby boom. Between 6 and 14 million children are being brought up by at least one homosexual parent (Johnston & O'Connor, 2002, **BK**). The documentary film All Aboard! Rosie's Family Cruise (Cookson, 2006) illustrates the diversity of these families. Gays become parents through a variety of methods including natural conception, stepparenthood, foster care, joint parenting arrangements, donor insemination, in vitro fertilization, and surrogacy. Critics charge that these children are vulnerable to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral problems but researchers have failed to support these claims (Fitzgerald, 1999, **JN**; Flaks, Ficher, Masterpasqua, & Joseph, 1995, **JN**; Lambert, 2005, **JN**; Golombok, Tasker, & Murray, 1997, **JN**, Tasker, & Golombok, 1997, **BK**). To the contrary, a longitudinal study (Gartrell, Banks, Hamilton, & Mosbacher, 1996, **JN**), a volume of scholarly essays (Lehmann, 2001, **BK**), and qualitative studies (Litovich, & Langhout, 2004; Mallon, 2004) describe the normalcy of gay male and lesbian families.

Suggestions have also been made that homosexual parents produce gender-atypical children who are more likely to become homosexual themselves. A variety of studies have failed to support these concerns (Bailey, Bobrow, Wolfe, & Mikach, 1995, **JN**; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002, **BK**) but a few have indicated that sons and daughters of lesbians are slightly more gender-atypical in their behavior, play and dress, and preferences than those reared by heterosexual mothers (Tasker & Golombok, 1997). They are also more likely to consider engaging in homoerotic activity but not more likely to identify as gay. Stacey and Biblarz (2001, **JN**) propose that these differences have been overlooked perhaps to avoid giving critics of gay families fodder for censure.

What do we know about gay fathers and their children? The paucity of research on this population makes this question difficult to answer. The literature indicates that children raised by gay fathers are no more likely to have psychological or social problems (Lambert, 2005; Mallon, 2004; **BK**) or to be gay (Bailey, Bobrow, Wolfe, & Mikach, 1995, **JN**) than those raised by straight fathers. The documentary Daddy & Papa (Symons, 2002) examines the joys, troubles, political issues, and psychological concerns of four families headed by gay men. Interestingly, many gay fathers report feeling estranged from and rejected by the gay community (Mallon, 2004; **BK**). Research on gay fathers needs to be done and Lambert (2005, **JN**) urges researchers to ask new questions in order to educate the people who work with gay male and lesbian families.

A number of support groups and informational organizations offer help to gay male and lesbian parents (Family Pride, Lesbian & Gay Parenting, Organizations Supporting Gay and Lesbian Parent, n.d., **WEB**). The children of LBGT parents also need support and education, and a number of resources are available to them. For example, That's a Family: A Film for Kids about Family Diversity (Chasnoff, Ben-Dov, & Yacker, 2000) and Rainbow Rumpus (n.d., **WEB**) are aimed at young children, and the support group Colage (n.d., **WEB**) is meant for older

children and teens. Garner (2002, **BK**) explores the gay family experience from the offspring's perspective, and her insights provide a clear depiction of today's gay male and lesbian families.

## Books

Garner, A. (2004). Families like mine: Children of gay parents tell it like it is. New York: Harper-Collins.

A young woman with two gay fathers who has also become an activist for gay families writes this stimulating book. She talks about her experiences and other children like her. Below are the two most valuable messages in this book.

“Children of LBGT Parents Growing Up Under Scrutiny”

Gay parents feel pressure to show that their kids are normal. The author explains how this puts undue pressure on those children to be well behaved and to keep any family difficulties under wraps.

“Straight Kids in a Queer Culture”

How do straight children raised in gay environments adjust to living in a straight world? The author provides an exercise to help people explore this question.

Howey, N., & Samuels, E. (Eds.). (2000). Out of the ordinary: Essays on growing up with gay lesbian and transgendered parents. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

This collection of essays concerns LBGT families.

“Translation,” by Jeffrey Wright, with Christopher Healy

A gay man who grew up with an abusive mother writes this essay. A gay man later adopted him, but his road to recovery was slow and rocky.

“Smile and Say Nothing,” by Ian Wheeler-Nicholson

The author, a young man who grew up with his lesbian mother and her lover, discusses how his mother was not open about her sexuality.

“Charlotte,” by Meagan Rosser

A woman, who was raised by her mother and her comother Charlotte, expresses her grief over Charlotte’s death from cancer.

“Getting Closer,” by Laura Zee

A young woman who grew up with her mother and her transgendered talks about the shame and embarrassment she felt concerning her father.

Johnson, S. M., & O’Connor, E. (2002). The gay baby boom: The psychology of gay parenthood. New York: New York University Press.

This book provides an excellent review of the psychological research done on lesbian and gay male families.

“Chapter 3: Are the children normal?”

The chapter reviews the literature that examines the impact of gay parents on their children, none of which reveals any negative effect.

Lehmann, J. M. (2001). Gay & lesbian marriage & family reader: Analyses of problems & prospects for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Lincoln, NE: Gordian Knot Books.

In this collection of academic essays are two good articles on lesbian families.

“Lesbian Stepfamilies: A Unique Family Structure,” by Pauline I. Erera and Karen Fredriksen

This article reviews the similarities between lesbian stepfamilies and straight stepfamilies. The authors suggest how lesbian mothers can best go about meeting the needs of their stepfamilies.

“Lesbian Motherhood: Negotiating Marginal Mainstream Identities,” by Amy L. Hequembourg and Michael P. Farrell

This article reports interview data from nine lesbian mothers and comothers. Participants described how they handled being a member of a marginal group. The article gives a clear picture of lesbian mothers and the struggles they face.

Mallon, G. P. (2004). Gay men choosing parenthood. New York: Columbia University Press.

Only 25% of gay families are headed by gay males. This book includes commentary by 20 gay fathers who discuss their parenting desires, experiences, and responses to and from their communities.

“Chapter 3: Community Responses to Gay Dads”

This chapter examines how community members reacted to the respondents' gay families. Interestingly, many gay fathers reported feeling estranged from and rejected by the gay community.

Tasker, F. L., & Golombok, S. (1997). Growing up in a lesbian family. New York: The Guilford Press.

The results of the first longitudinal study of lesbian families are presented in this book. Lesbian mothers and their children were interviewed once in 1976 and again in 1991. The offspring of lesbian and control mothers were compared on four dimensions: family relationships, peer relationships, intimate relationships, and psychological adjustment.

“Chapter 6: Intimate Relationships”

The findings on intimate relationships are presented in this chapter. Young adults raised by lesbian mothers questioned their sexuality significantly more than young adults raised by heterosexual mothers and engaged in significantly more same-sex sexual relationships than young adults raised by heterosexual couples. Such findings are particularly interesting because most studies have shown no differences in children's intimate relationships.

## Articles

Bailey, J. M., Bobrow, D., Wolfe, M., & Mikach, S. (1995). Sexual orientation of adult sons of gay fathers. Developmental Psychology, 31, 124-129.

Researchers conducted interviews with the adult sons of gay fathers. Results showed that 10% of the sons were homosexual. This equals the general population rate, which is evidence that gay fathers are not more likely to produce gay sons. The study, however, may have a sampling problem because gay fathers with gay sons may be less likely to volunteer and participate.

Fitzgerald, B. (1999). Children of lesbian and gay parents: A review of the literature. Marriage & Family Review, 29, 57-75.

This literature review (1972-1997) reports that children raised by gay male or lesbian parents do not have more behavioral, cognitive, intellectual, or emotional problems than do children raised by heterosexual parents.

Flaks, D. K., Ficher, I., Masterpasqua, F., & Joseph, G. (1995). Lesbians choosing motherhood: A comparative study of lesbian and heterosexual parents and their children. Developmental Psychology, 31, 105-114.

The study demonstrates that children of lesbian mothers do not differ cognitively or behaviorally from children of heterosexual mothers. Teachers and parents both reported on psychological adjustment and social capabilities, which distinguishes this research from many others, and counters any criticism that parent ratings are less than objective.

Gartrell, N., Banks, A., Hamilton, J., & Mosbacher, D. (1996). The national lesbian family Study: 1. Interviews with prospective mothers. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 66, 272-281.

Psychologists did a 25-year longitudinal study. This article reports interviews with the women at the time of donor insemination. See references to the next three studies for interviews when their children were toddlers, 5-year-olds, and 10-year olds. Each article provides a close look at the inner workings and normalcy of these families.

Gartrell, N., Banks, A., Hamilton, J., Reed, N., Bishop, H., & Rodas, C. (1999). The National Lesbian Family Study: 2. Interviews with mothers of toddlers. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 69, 362-369.

Gartrell, N., Banks, A., Reed, N., Hamilton, J., Rodas, C., & Deck, A. (2000). The National Lesbian Family Study: 3. Interviews with mothers of five-year-olds. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 70, 542-548.

Gartrell, N., Deck, A., Rodas, C., Peyser, H., & Banks, A. (2005). The National Lesbian Family Study: 4. Interviews with the 10-year-old children. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry,

75, 518- 524.

Gershon, T. D., Tschann, J. M., & Jemerin, J. M. (1999). Stigmatization, self-esteem, and coping among the adolescent children of lesbian mothers. Journal of Adolescent Health, 24, 437-445.

Children raised by lesbian mothers who report feeling stigmatized have significantly lower levels of self-esteem. Good coping skills were shown to moderate the impact of perceived stigma. Therapists, teachers, and parents need to be aware of these data.

Golombok, S., Tasker, F., & Murray, C. (1997). Children raised in fatherless families from infancy: Family relationships and the socioemotional development of children of lesbian and single heterosexual mothers. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 38, 783-791.

Children raised in fatherless families, by single lesbian or heterosexual mothers, were compared to children raised with fathers. No differences were found on a variety of psychological measures. Lesbian mothers did, however, spend more time interacting with their children than did heterosexual mothers.

Lambert, S. (2005). Gay and lesbian families: What we know and where to go from here. The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 13, 43-51.

This literature review presents an in-depth analysis of the research on gay male and lesbian families. The consensus is that the mental health of these children does not differ from children raised by heterosexual parents.. Lambert urges researchers to ask new questions in order to educate the counselors and teachers who work with these families. How do gay male and lesbian parents function in a straight society? What kinds of support do gay male and lesbian families get and need? How does the arrival of children change gay male and lesbian relationships? How do variations in race, religion, and socioeconomic status influence gay male and lesbian families? This article also has one of the best reviews of the work done on gay fathers.

Litovich, M. L., & Langhout, R. D. (2004). Framing heterosexism in lesbian families: A preliminary examination of resilient coping. Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 14, 411-435.

Interviewers asked lesbian parents how their families function in the face of heterosexism. All mothers gave examples of when their homosexuality had caused social problems for their children. Mothers reported that discussing homosexuality and warning their children about heterosexism were the two most common ways they readied their children for negative reactions. Results indicated that these negative experiences did not adversely influence the children.

Stacey, J., & Biblarz, T. (2001). (How) does the sexual orientation of parents matter? American Sociological Review, 66, 159-183.

Researchers have demonstrated repeatedly that the children of gay male and lesbian parents are normal but the children do show some interesting differences. For example, lesbian-raised daughters are more gender atypical in behavior, play, and dress than are daughters of heterosexual mothers. Gay-male-raised children are also more apt to question their sexuality and experiment but not more likely to identify as gay. The authors claim that these differences have been overlooked, perhaps to avoid giving critics of gay families fodder for censure.

## Documentary Films

Chasnoff, D., Ben-Dov, A. J., & Yacker, F. (Directors). (2000). That's a family: A film for kids about family diversity [Motion picture]. (Available from Women's Educational Media, 2180 Bryant Street, Suite 203, San Francisco, CA 94110) (35 min)

This film was designed for elementary age children. It interviews members of several nontraditional families. It also comes with a discussion and teaching guide.

Children: Josh and Mara; Mothers: Joan and Stacy

This family is Jewish and Hispanic. According to Josh the only bad thing about having gay mothers is that some kids use bad words (for lesbians and gays), and this hurts his feelings.

Children: Dominique, Taquisha, and Alma; Mothers: Lee and Angie

This family is African American. Lee gave birth to Dominique and Angie gave birth to Taquisha and Alma. Dominique explains how it is sometimes hard to tell kids about her two mothers, not because they make fun of her but rather because many get confused.

Cookson, S. (Director). (2006). All aboard! Rosie's family cruise [Television broadcast]. New York: HBO. (91 mins)

Rosie O'Donnell organized a 7-day cruise to the Caribbean for 1,500 people—gay male, straight, and lesbian. It is a funny, moving, and affirming film about families who love each other.

Teaching Topic: The Wedding

Two gay fathers with five adopted children marry while on board in a touching ceremony.

Teaching Topic: Sperm Donors

Two women are trying to have a baby. During the cruise they meet two gay men and strike up a friendship. The men volunteer to be sperm donors. This story illustrates one of many ways that gay families are formed.

Teaching Topic: The Police Stop

Two gay fathers describe a time when the police stopped them. The police accused them of kidnapping or abusing the child. They are certain that this never would have happened to two women.

Spadola, M. (Director). (2000). Our house: A very real documentary about kids of gay and lesbian parents [Television broadcast]. (Available from Sugar Pictures, 4701 Greenpoint Avenue # 139, Sunny Side, NY 11104) (56 min)

Children in five gay families narrate their lives. The diversity of such families is evident.

Teaching Topic: The Families

Long Island: Different

Daniel (13) and his four younger siblings have two White Christian adoptive fathers. Daniel loves his fathers and does not hide their sexual orientation. He does, however, grow weary of having to explain that his family is different.

#### Arkansas: Homophobia is Alive and Well

Ryan (female, 15) and Cary (male, 23) live with their two White Christian mothers in a very small, conservative town in Kansas. The experiences of this family demonstrate that antigay attitudes and gay-bashing are still a problem.

#### Arizona: White, Mormon, and Gay

Dwight and Jan were dedicated Mormons who had two daughters, Ember (16) and Dana (14). Then, Dwight came out as gay and the family equilibrium was disrupted.

#### New Jersey: Secrets

Saveon (5), Sandor (9), & Ivorie (15) live with their two African American Christian mothers. These children (unlike those above) hide their family structure.

#### New York: Dad Changes His Mind

Ry (17) and Cade (19) were conceived by a donor insemination and live with their White Jewish and Latina Christian mothers. Although Ry's and Cade's donor father agreed not to have any claim to his children, he changed his mind, resulting in litigation for 4 years.

Symons, J. (Director). (2002). Daddy & papa: A story of gay fathers in America [Motion picture]. (Available from New Day Films, 190 Route 17M, P.O. Box 1084, Harriman, NY 10926) (57 min)

The film explores the joys, troubles, political issues, and psychological concerns of four families headed by gay men.

#### Teaching Topic: Filmmakers

Johnny and William adopt an African American boy. In an interesting scene William (a biracial man) discusses transracial adoption and worries that many gay fathers who adopt children not of their own race are not prepared.

#### Single Father

A single Caucasian gay father named Kelly adopts two African American brothers (ages 2 and 3). Issues of transracial adoption come up in this section as well. Kelly talks about the strains of single-parenthood, the isolation of living in a very gay neighborhood without other children, and the loneliness of not having a partner.

#### Divorced Fathers

Two gay men have a 9-year-old daughter born by surrogacy. They are now divorced. One father says he thinks the issue of divorce is more of a problem for his daughter than the fact of having two gay fathers. The story is complicated by the addition of a new partner for one of the men.

## Feature Films

Féjerman, D. & Paris, I. (Directors). (2002). Mi madre le gustan las mujeres (My mother likes women) [Motion picture]. Spain: Wolfe Video (96 min)

Sophia has three adult daughters. One day she invites her daughters to meet her new love interest who, unbeknownst to them, is a woman.

Teaching Topic: Bad Reaction

Sofia's daughters are hip, talented, well educated, and open-minded. Nonetheless their mother's new lover horrifies them. Their reaction demonstrates the difficulty that even open-minded people have coming to grips with having a gay parent.

Katrian, L. (Director). (2001). Des parents pas comme les autres (Motion picture) (Same sex parents). France: Picture This! Entertainment (86 min)

This French film is about a teenage girl born to a lesbian mother and a gay male friend. She lives in a small town and gets teased in school, but her mother refuses to talk about her sexuality. This silence pushes the daughter to move to Paris to live with her father and his gay lover.

Teaching Topic: Internalized Homophobia

The mother in this film is gay but she is secretive, defensive, and refuses to discuss the matter with her daughter. Thus the daughter's coming of age is made more difficult by her unresolved sexual minority status.

## Web Sites

Amber Davis Tourelentes: Photo Works

<http://www.bu.edu/prc/document/davis.htm>

<http://www.amberdavisphotographer.com/index.html>

This site presents a photographic exhibit called “My Family,” a series that looks at her gay family from 1952 to the present. It also includes an exhibit called “Family Portraits,” a series of photos of gay families attending gay family week in Provincetown, MA. The photos can provoke class discussion about the definition of family.

Colage: Children of Lesbian & Gay Kids Everywhere

<http://www.colage.org/>

This Web site targets youth who have LGBT parents. The site provides a book list, a movie list, and Web sites links, and an archive of other Colage publications. It also offers tips for making classrooms safer and suggests program ideas to raise consciousness about gay families.

Family Pride

<http://www.familypride.org/>

This political Web site is dedicated to protecting the rights of LGBT families around the world. The site offers information on how to become a LGBT family advocate and how to play a role in defeating anti-gay legislation.

Lesbian & Gay Parenting

<http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/publications/lgparenthome.html>

People interested in legal and policy concerns associated with gay male and lesbian parenting should visit this site. Part I provides a summary of the literature on gay parenting. Part II provides an annotated bibliography of the material reported in the summary. Part III offers APA amicus briefs on adoption, custody, and visitation issues with reference to gay families.

Organizations Supporting Gay & Lesbian Parents

<http://www.buddybuddy.com/orgs-par.html>

Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and descriptions of the many support groups available to gay male and lesbian parents can be found on this site.

Rainbow Rumpus

<http://www.rainbowrumpus.org/>

Rainbow Rumpus is an online magazine for children from LGBT families. It has cute and informative stories, songs, and film clips from the documentary “That’s a Family.”

Students can visit the site and write their reactions: Did they approve or disapprove? Could such information be beneficial? Could such information be harmful?