

How Can I Meet Others?

- Attend your school's GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) group - or start one. Although you don't always know who is straight or gay, it's a safe start.
- Read Wayves magazine for NS info (available at the Sexual Health Centre in Bridgewater and Second Story Women's Centre in Lunenburg).
- Attend one of the Youth Project's special events (dances, ski trips, etc.).
- For those 19 or over, go to one of Halifax's gay night clubs.

Some of these opportunities are not available when you are young and in a small town. You may have to wait for other chances, like going to college or university in a city. Most campuses have a GLBT/Pride social or support group.

What Do I Tell My Parents?

Some people want to tell their parents while others feel it is best if they never know. It's up to you. Before you tell them, think about things like: how they will respond; if you're financially and emotionally dependent on them; safety in your home; your comfort with your sexual identity, etc. If you tell them, they may need help adjusting to your new identity. Some will go through shock, denial, anger or guilt before accepting you (or not). Others may be instantly accepting or say that they already suspected. Try to be understanding and give them time if they need it.

Resources:

- The Sexual Health Centre: 527-2868
- The Youth Project: 1-902-429-5429, www.youthproject.ns.ca (Counselling and support; support groups in Halifax; special events, etc.) Serves people under 25 years.
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) www.pflagcanada.ca
National Support Line: 1-888-530-6777
Bridgewater contact: Bernadette 543-2710, Bridgewtrns@pflagcanada.ca
- Teen Place (New Germany): 644-3430
- School guidance counsellors
- Your doctor may be comfortable talking to you

SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE Lunenburg County

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United Way of Lunenburg County



What's it mean to be

Gay

Lesbian

Bisexual and

Two-Spirited



SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE
Lunenburg County

The experts in sexual and reproductive health

Definitions

Gay is a term that was originally for anyone attracted to someone of the same sex. It can still be used that way, and also specifically for men who are attracted to men.

Lesbian is a term used for women who are attracted to women. Many women now prefer the term lesbian, but some still prefer to call themselves gay.

Bisexual refers to people who are attracted to both sexes. They may have a stronger preference for one sex, or they may be equally attracted. When someone is just coming to terms with their sexual orientation, they might not be sure if they are bisexual or gay. Sometimes this takes time and experience to figure out.

Two-Spirited was a term some Aboriginal peoples used to describe a person with both male and female qualities. It was a positive term; those considered two-spirited were honoured. The term has been adopted by most of the Aboriginal cultures to mean gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Transgender is a term for people who do not fit traditional male or female roles and expectations. Often they are people who identify with a gender other than the one given at birth. Being transgender does not necessarily mean being gay or lesbian.

How Do I Know if I'm Gay or Bi?

You may be attracted to, or have thoughts of sex with someone of the same sex, whether you are gay or not. Many people imagine having relations with a person of the same sex at some point in their life. This doesn't mean they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. Neither does the act of sex. Experimenting does not determine your sexual orientation; being GLBT is something you are, not something you do.



No one but you can figure out your orientation. Working through your feelings is often a confusing time.

Teens sometimes use methods of escape such as drugs, alcohol, the internet, video games, or TV to avoid their confusing thoughts and feelings. Be honest with yourself. Admit your fears. Realizing you are GLBT may help you take control of your life.

During your questioning phase, you may be sure what you are one day and then feel different the next. This, too, is normal. But there's no time limit to figure this out so you don't need to rush.

You don't need to have sex to know if you are gay, just like straight people don't have sex before discovering they are straight. You also don't have to be "out of the closet" (public

about your sexual orientation). These are personal choices and you can do whatever works for you. You might want to talk to someone you know and trust. Or you may feel safer contacting someone from a GLBT-friendly organization.

It is estimated that about 10 percent of our population see themselves as not straight. If you would like more information or have questions about being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, see the resources listed on the back.

Did You Know?

- Youth who are GLBT report becoming aware of feeling different than other children around the ages of 5 to 7. However, they are unaware that the difference is linked to their sexuality.
- The average age when youth who are GLBT become aware that their feelings of difference are linked to sexual orientation is 13 years.

