

BEFORE COMING OUT TO YOUR PARENTS



**What to Consider
Before Coming Out**

Planned Parenthood Alberta (PPA) is a registered charitable organization of committed individuals working for Albertans to ensure: mandatory, comprehensive sexuality education; accessible reproductive and sexual health information and services; reproductive rights; and accessible contraception.

PPA's Mission Statement

PPA supports reproductive choice and promotes sexual health for all Albertans. **PPA** works to support the equality of all individuals in matters of sexual health cognizant of human dignity and diversity.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Inc. is a support, education and advocacy organization. Founded in the US in 1981 by 25 parents, **PFLAG** now represents thousands of families throughout the world, including Canada and Alberta. **PFLAG** is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization that is not affiliated with any political or religious institution.

PFLAG'S Mission Statement

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with oppression still remaining from the past; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. **PFLAG** provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Two-spirited (GLBT) Youth Outreach Project is a joint project between **PFLAG**, **PPA** and individual members of the gay, lesbian and bisexual community. The project goals are: to develop and disseminate informational resources for rural **GLBT** youth; to educate professionals (e.g., school counsellors, teachers, etc.) regarding **GLBT** issues; to develop a list of resources for **GLBT** support; and to help establish support for **GLBT** youth, their parents, families and friends in communities throughout the province.

Coming Out revised May 1998.

QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO CONSIDER BEFORE COMING OUT

- 1. Are you sure about your sexual orientation?**
Don't raise the issue unless you're able to respond with confidence to the question, "*Are you sure?*" Confusion on your part will increase your parents' confusion and decrease their confidence in your judgment.
- 2. Are you comfortable with your gay sexuality?**
If you're wrestling with guilt and periods of depression, you'll be better off waiting to tell your parents. Coming out to them may require tremendous energy on your part - it will require a reserve of positive self-image.
- 3. Do you have support?**
In the event your parents' reaction devastates you, there should be someone or a group that you can confidently turn to for emotional support and strength. Maintaining your sense of self-worth is critical.

Even when parents react supportively, it may be that the child will discover the parents' need for support is greater than his or hers. This need not frighten a person. Many times, as the experience matures, it unites the family in a way only a few ever know.
- 4. Are you knowledgeable about homosexuality?**
Your parents will probably respond based on a lifetime of information from a homophobic society. If you've done some serious reading on the subject, you'll be able to assist them by sharing reliable information and research.
- 5. What's the emotional climate at home?**
If you have the choice of when to tell, consider the timing. Choose a time when they're not dealing with such matters as the death of a close friend, pending surgery or the loss of a job.
- 6. Can you be patient?**
Your parents will require time to deal with this information if they haven't considered it prior to your sharing. The process may last from six months to two years.
- 7. What's your motive for coming out now?**
Hopefully, it's because you love them and are uncomfortable with the distance you feel. Never come out in anger or during an argument, using your sexuality as a weapon.
- 8. Do you have available resources?**
Homosexuality is a subject most non-gay people know little about. Have available at least one of the following: a book addressed to parents, a

contact for the local or national **PFLAG** or the name of a non-gay counsellor who can deal fairly well with the issue.

9. Are you financially dependent on your parents?

If you suspect they are capable of withdrawing college finances or forcing you out of the house, you may choose to wait until they do not have this weapon to hold over you.

10. What is your general relationship with your parents?

If you've gotten along well and have always known their love - and shared your love for them in return - chances are they'll be able to deal with the issue in a positive way.

11. What is their moral societal view?

If they tend to see social issues in clear terms of good/bad or holy-sinful, you may anticipate that they will have serious problems dealing with your sexuality. If, however, they've evidenced a degree of flexibility when dealing with other changing societal manners, you may be able to anticipate a willingness to work this through with you.

12. Is this your decision?

Not everyone should come out to his or her parents. Don't be pressured into it if you're not sure you'll be better off by doing so - no matter what their response.



PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Thank you to Tom Sauerman

The purpose of this section is to inform gay and lesbian young adults about the process most parents go through when their child's sexual orientation is disclosed. The stages to be explained are: shock, denial, guilt, expression of feelings, personal decision-making and true acceptance.

The process assumes that you have wrestled with the issue of whether or not to come out to your parents and that your decision is affirmative. The approach and suggestions offered here are based on the assumption you suspect one or both of your parents will be understanding, if not supportive, given adequate time. This may not be helpful if you have serious reservations about their ability to cope and you suspect they could sever their relationship with you.

A caution: Each family is unique. Although most are likely to follow the stages outlined here, allow some latitude for your parents' culture. Few parents are 'model' cases that perfectly fit the following description.



PARENTS AND CHILDREN SWITCH ROLES

When you come out to your parents, you may find your parent-child roles reversed for a while. They will need to learn from your experience. As your parents deal with your disclosure, you must assume the 'parenting' role by allowing them time to express their feelings and make progress toward new insights. This will not be easy. You'll want them to understand and grasp this important part of your life right away.

It will be easy for you to become impatient. you'll need to repeat many of the same things. Just because you've explained something once does not mean they heard it. Their understanding will evolve slowly, painfully slow, at the beginning. Their emotional reactions will get in the way of their intellectual understandings.

Allow them time and space. Consider your own journey. You've been working on this issue for years! Although the issues that your parents will work through are similar to those you've dealt with, the difference is that you're ahead of them in the process. Be patient.



THE ISSUE: SEPARATION AND LOSS

Many families take the news as a temporary loss - almost as a death - of the son or daughter they have known and loved. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross describes the stages related to the death of a loved one as denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Just as in grief, the first reaction of parents of gays and lesbians centers around separation and loss. I remember one morning when my son was fixing breakfast at the stove, as I sat at the kitchen table reading the newspaper. I looked at him and wanted to say, *"I don't know who you are, but I wish you'd leave and send my son Ted back."* Parents experience loss when their child comes out but it probably will be only temporary.

Although the stages described here apply to most people, they are not an absolute progression for everyone. Sometimes a stage occurs out of order, occasionally one is skipped. Some progress through the stages in three months,

others take years. A few - often due to self-pity - make no progress at all. In any case, the initial feeling is usually one of loss.

Most parents think they know and understand their children from the day of their birth. Even though they cling to old stories - and sometimes evidence confusion in telling some of them - most remain confident that they know what's going on inside a child. They lose the perception they once had of their child and don't yet know if they will like the real person who is replacing that idea. Those who experience the biggest shock when their child comes out are probably those who suffer the greatest feeling of loss and rejection. It's not that they separate from the child as much as it's that they feel their child has willfully separated from them.

They sense the separation - which you've probably been aware of for years - for the first time. It's a traumatic discovery. With understanding and patience from all parties, that relationship can be restored. In fact, in most cases, it improves because it's based on mutual honesty.



PART 2: STAGES OF UNDERSTANDING

SHOCK

An initial state of shock can be anticipated if you suspect that your parents have no idea what you're about to share. It may last anywhere from ten minutes to a week - usually it wears off in a few days. Shock is a natural reaction that we all experience (and need for a while) to avoid acute distress and unpleasantness.

Explain that you haven't been able to be completely honest with them and you don't like the distance that has occurred over the years. Affirm your love for them. Say it more than once. Although they may not initially respond positively to your profession of love, it will penetrate in the hours when they are alone and thinking about it. Remind them that you are the same person today that you were yesterday. *"You loved me yesterday - before I told; I haven't changed since then. I'm the same person today that I was yesterday."*

Occasionally, a parent will experience no shock at all: *"I always knew you were different; I considered this as a possibility. It's O.K. I love you. You'll have to help me understand and accept the reality."* Sometimes they say, *"We've known for a long time because of a letter you left on the table last summer. We've been waiting for you to tell us."* In these instances, your task will be considerably easier, as they've already worked through some of the stages on their own.

DENIAL

Denial helps to shield a person from a threatening or painful message. It's different from shock because it indicates the person has heard the message and is attempting to build a defence mechanism to ward it off. Denial responses take many forms: hostility ("*No son of mine is going to be queer.*"), non-registering ("*That's nice, dear, what do you want for dinner?*"), non-caring, ("*If you choose that lifestyle, I don't want to hear about it.*"), or rejections ("*It's just a phase; you'll get over it.*").

Their perception of your homosexual orientation may be distorted by the messages they've received and accepted from our homophobic society. The manner in which the denial is expressed can range from a serene trance to hysterical crying or shouting. Many parents take a 'middle of the road' approach - they cry frequently.

My wife and I were sure that our son had been caught up in some form of gay liberation activity that appealed to him because it seemed dangerous and exciting. We thought the media coverage about homosexuality probably attracted him and that he lacked maturity to know what he really wanted. We insisted that he go once to a psychiatrist to deal with the anger that had been building for over a year. We agreed to visit the doctor too, in a separate session. After two or three visits by Ted, the psychiatrist shredded our defence mechanism of denial: "*I've counselled many gay young adults and I'm convinced this is no passing fancy; to the best of my knowledge, your son is gay.*"

You might be ready to suggest the name of a counsellor or two if your parents think that counselling will help to clarify their confusion. It would be advisable to suggest a non-gay person because your parents will want an 'unbiased' view. If they press for you to see a counsellor, suggest that they match you session-for-session. They may resist on the grounds that they don't need help. However, underneath, they'll probably welcome someone to talk to.

Your parents may need some help in separating what's 'normal' from the 'norm'. It's probable that they'll think homosexuality is not normal. You can help them by explaining that although homosexuality is not the norm, it *is* what is natural to you. Point out that all of creation has exceptions to the norm. While most people are right-handed, some are left-handed. Although most people have two eyes of the same colour, some have a different colour in each eye. They need to begin to understand that although your sexual orientation is not in the norm, it *is* a natural and honest response for you.

If their denial takes the form of, "*I don't want to talk about it*", you should take a gentle and cautious initiative if they haven't changed in about a week. Gently raise the subject when they appear relaxed: "*Dad, I've been waiting to talk to you about this for years; please don't push me out of your life. I can no longer bear*

the burden of lying to you. I love you and want you to continue to love me in return." Personalize your message as a way of penetrating their defence.

There's no need to tell them more than what they ask. Volunteering information about experiences will make them build stronger defences. Answer only what they ask for. They'll get to other questions at another time. Because they'll experience awkwardness in framing their questions, you may need to clarify the question before providing a response.

Be ready to deal with your parents individually, if necessary. Most couples react to this disclosure as they have to other shocks - one takes the lead and moves toward resolution ahead of the other. Don't be upset with the slower of the two. It's not infrequent that couples have dysfunction in their own relationship when this occurs. The one who seems to adapt more quickly may suggest that his or her spouse is actually enjoying the agonizing. The one who moves more slowly may think the other is far too accepting of the situation. Parents who move at different rates may experience tension, whether expressed or unspoken.



GUILT

Most people who deal with homosexuality initially perceive it as a 'problem' and ask, *"What causes it?"* They think if they can locate a cause, then a cure is not far behind.

For me, the question became introspective: "What did I do wrong?" Whether I viewed the cause as genetic or environmental, I was clearly to blame. I questioned the kind of male role model I had provided. I examined my masculinity. For a while, no matter which angle I viewed the situation from, I believed I was the primary source of the problem. It was a feeling I was too ashamed and saddened to share with anyone else. Although both parents usually feel guilty, the parent who is the same gender as the child probably feels it more. Then one day, my wife said: *"I don't think it's reasonable for you to take the blame; you raised two sons, one gay and one straight. There must be other factors involved."*

It's not uncommon for single parents to heap extra blame on themselves because of an earlier loss, separation or divorce from their spouse: *"I knew I failed you. I just couldn't be both mother and father at the same time."* When parents feel guilty, they are self-centered. They are not yet concerned with what you've been through. In this stage, they're too wrapped up in themselves to attend to your concerns.

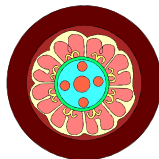
FEELINGS EXPRESSED

When it's clear that guilt and self-incrimination are unproductive, parents are ready to ask questions - listen to answers and acknowledge their feelings. This is the point at which some of the most productive dialogue between you and your parents will take place. Now will pour forth the full range of feelings: *"I'm disappointed that I won't have any grandchildren."* *"Please don't tell anyone in the family; I'm not ready to face this issue with anyone else."* *"I feel so alone and hurt; I believe I was better off not knowing."* *"How can you hurt us this way?"* or *"I wish I were dead."*

Since living in a homophobic society has forced you to experience many of the same feelings (isolation, fear of rejection, hurt, confusion, fear of the future, etc.), you can share with them the similarities in the feelings you have experienced. However, allow them ample time to express themselves - don't let your needs overpower theirs. If they haven't read a book or talked to other parents, suggest again that they pursue one of those avenues. Offer to read and discuss a chapter in the book with them - or to go to a parents' meeting with them.

Ted had cautiously suggested earlier that we meet Dan. Initially, we had no interest in that suggestion because when we stopped blaming ourselves for what had happened, we began blaming Dan. I was angry that his catastrophe had befallen our home. I was sure it was going to ruin our lives. I had always felt we were good parents, hardly deserving of this. My anger toward Ted was seldom expressed to him - but it was there for me to deal with.

Anger and hurt are probably the most frequently expressed feelings. They are often surface feelings that seem spiteful and cruel. In order for your parents to make progress, it's better that they vocalize them than bury them and attempt to deny their existence. What they might say will be hard for you to handle. You may be tempted to withdraw, regretting that you ever opened this issue. However, hang in there - there's no turning back now. When they begin to express these feelings, they're on the road to recovery.



PERSONAL DECISION-MAKING

As the emotional trauma subsides, your parents will increasingly deal more rationally with the issue. At this point, it's common for them to retreat for a while and consider the options that lie ahead. It's like reaching a fork in the road that has a number of paths from which to choose. The choice each person makes is a reflection of the attitude he or she is ready to adopt in dealing with the situation.

Both parents may not necessarily choose to take the same path. A number of factors will influence which path is chosen. Reading about homosexuality and talking to other parents will probably encourage them to take a more supportive position. Their religious orientation will play an important part. The general liberal or conservative position they usually hold will also have some bearing. The importance of the restoration of their relationship with you is a major factor. A variety of factors will affect them as they formulate a compatible posture for dealing with this.

Three kinds of decisions will be described:

1. Most parents continue to love their child in a way that allows them to say, "*I love you*", to accept the reality of the child's sexual orientation and to be supportive. In fact, now that the relationship between parents and child is on a level of mutual honesty and trust, most parents say that their relationship is better than it ever was. All parties begin to feel better about what has happened.

Although they may have had some glimpses prior to this time, supportive parents are increasingly aware of your needs. They become concerned about the problems that you have to face. Although we have had some glimpses prior to this time, my wife and I became more aware of our son's needs and what he had been through. In fact, we were amazed he had handled all the tensions and problems as well as he did for all those years.

Our awareness and love for him soon involved us in offering to begin solving some problems in an effort to reduce some of those tensions: a single room at college would enable him to live his life without having to offer excuses or explanations to a roommate. Dan was invited home more often and gradually became an important member of our family. When Ted told his brother, we were able to talk to Louis and support Ted.

2. Sometimes parents respond by making it clear that it's an issue which no longer requires discussion. Although they can discuss the matter, they are quite fragile in dealing with it. They have progressed this far and wish to go no further. This does not necessarily reflect a negative attitude toward you. They know their limits and don't want to be pushed beyond them. Although you need to respect that stance, you can still make efforts to reach out to them. Let them know that you love them - in word and deed. Cautiously let them know some things that you do related to your sexuality, i.e., gay groups in which you're involved (community centre, religion, athletics). Make it a point not to let them drift away from you. Introduce them to some of your friends - meeting other homosexual persons (in small numbers) will help to break down the stereotypes they may hold.

3. In some instances, your sexual orientation can be the staging area for constant warfare. Everything you do and say is viewed as a symptom of your 'problem'. (The hours you keep, your language, choice of friends, vocational selection, school grades, etc.). However, in reality, it may reflect a parent's feeling of personal inadequacy. As long as this condition exists, both parent and child are in a no-win position. Generally speaking, if one parent assumes this extreme a position, the other parent may have difficulty choosing a role that is far from it. When relating to their children, parents are often outwardly supportive of each other - even if, behind closed doors, they don't completely agree between themselves. I'm convinced that most parents who attend a parent's meeting - or who enter into personal conversation with a supportive parent - greatly increase the chance that they'll not remain negative. If they won't attend a meeting - or enter into personal conversation with a supportive parent - greatly increase the chance that they'll remain negative. If they won't attend a meeting, maybe they'll meet with some parents at a quiet restaurant. If all attempts fail, don't let the situation get you down. Find a parent-substitute or friend to whom you can turn for support.

A word about relapses is important. Problem solving and changing personal attitudes often can be diagrammed as two steps forward and one backward. It's not at all uncommon for parents to slip back a step or two to re-work it. It will be disappointing to you when this happens - but it's the way change usually comes about.



TRUE ACCEPTANCE

Some parents get this far. Most may love their child without finally accepting the child's life. Many reach the point where they can also celebrate their child's uniqueness. These fortunate ones view homosexuality as a legitimate expression of human sexuality. When asked if they wish that their child could be changed, they respond, "*I'd prefer to change our homophobic society so my child could live his life without rejection and fear.*"

Parents at this stage face up to their own guilt, that they are a part of a guilty society - a homophobic society. They reflect on the gay jokes they've told and laughed at over the years. They begin to understand the problems they unknowingly created for their child. This coming-to-terms with themselves may lead them to view the oppression of all gays and lesbians in a new light. They begin to speak out against the oppression. They talk to friends about the issues involved as a means of educating others. They support gay friends of their son or daughter. They attend parent meetings to help other parents. In short, they

become committed to a cause and find a way that is comfortable for them to make a positive contribution. Some do it boldly - others work at it quietly.



PART 3: EPILOGUE

Thank you to S.C.M., Calgary

"Coming out" - two words that freak out anyone who suspects that he or she may be gay. I am 21 years old. The only advice I can offer is to do whatever is conducive to the lifestyle you are living. That is to say, if you are from a *wholly religious* family who still supports you financially, would not accept "it" and would 'pray over' you every night, perhaps you may want to wait. If you are part of a loving but *redneck* family who feels that one possible way to cure all homosexuals is 'castration', again, perhaps wait. If you are in a *contemporary* family, they may be totally 'groovy' with it and not give it a second thought. If, by some stroke of luck, you were born into a totally *cosmopolitan* family, there were probably already introducing you to other little boys or girls in hopes of making a 'love connection' when you were 10 or 11 years old. Most people fall somewhere in the middle of these extremes but the point is simple. If you are happier coming out, then do. If not, then don't. The main word in it all is "*happy*". It is your life to live and you will eventually make the best decisions for yourself. I am not planning on telling my family - by the way, which is a mixture of all four above-mentioned categories - until I have finished all my schooling. Simply, I think, more than anything, they would look at my being gay as a hindrance, which would not help me achieve my scholastic goals. Therefore, I plan on telling them once I have my degrees. That is what works for me and makes me happy. So find what makes you happy and go with it despite all the ups and downs it may bring.



List of Famous Gay Men, Lesbians and Bisexuals

If you are gay, lesbian or bisexual, you are in good company.

Alexander Hamilton

U.S. Statesman

Alexander the Great

Military Conqueror

Allan Ginsberg

Poet

Anne Hecht

Actor

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ashley Mclsaac | Canadian Musician |
| Babe Didrikson Zaharias | Pro Golfer |
| Bessie Smith | Blues Singer |
| Bob Jackson-Paris | Former Mr. Universe |
| Brad Hunter | Canadian Playright |
| Brian Epstein | Manager of the Beatles |
| Brian Pockar | Canadian Figure Skater |
| Carl Lewis | Olympic Athlete |
| Chastity Bono | Daughter of Cher and Sonny Bono |
| Chief Crazy Horse | Native American Leader |
| Danny Pintauro | Actor |
| David Bowie | Musician |
| David Geffen | Music Producer |
| Ellen DeGeneres | Comedian |
| Elton John | Musician |
| Emily Dickinson | Poet |
| Florence Nightingale | Founder of Modern Nursing |
| George Cukor | Film Director |
| Gertrude Stein | Writer |
| Greg Louganis | Olympic Athlete |
| Hans Christian Andersen | Novelist |
| Harvey Fierstein | Playwright and Actor |
| James Baldwin | Writer |
| James Dean | Actor |
| Joan Baez | Musician and Singer |
| Joe Average | Canadian Musician |
| John Boswell | History Professor, Author |
| Julius Caesar | Roman Salesman |
| kd lang | Canadian Singer |
| Keith Boykin | President Clinton Aide |
| Leonard Bernstein | Composer and Conductor |
| Leonardo da Vinci | Inventor and Artist |
| Lily Tomlin | Comedian |
| Lord Byron | Poet |
| Margarethe Cammermeyer | Former National Guard Colonel |

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Marlene Dietrich | Actor |
| Martina Navratilova | Tennis Champion |
| Melissa Etheridge | Singer |
| Michael Mayer | Calgary Artist |
| Michael Phair | Edmonton City Councillor |
| Michelangelo | Artist |
| Montgomery Clift | Actor |
| Noel Coward | Playwright and Actor |
| Oscar Wilde | Poet, Novelist and Dramatist |
| Pansy Division | Singing Group |
| Plato | Philosopher |
| Réal Menard | Parti Quebecois Politician |
| Rob McCall | Canadian Figure Skater |
| Rock Hudson | Actor |
| Rudolf Valentino | Actor |
| Rudy Galindo | Olympic Athlete |
| RuPaul | Super Model |
| Rupert Everett | Actor |
| Sal Mineo | Actor |
| Sandra Bernhard | Comedian |
| Sir Lawrence Olivier | Actor |
| Socrates | Philosopher |
| Svend Robinson | Canadian Politician |
| T.E. Lawrence | Lawrence of Arabia |
| The Indigo Girls | Singing Group |
| Virginia Woolf | Novelist and Critic |
| Walt Whitman | Poet |



Videos and Recommended Books for Parents of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth, as well as for the young people themselves.

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Author/Video</u> | <u>Pub.</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| A Boy Named Phyllis | Frank DeCaro | 1996 |
| All-American Boy | Scott Peck | 1995 |
| Being Different | Larry Dane Brimner | 1995 |
| Beyond Acceptance | Carolyn Welch Griffin | 1986 |
| Children of Horizons | Gilbert H. Herdt | 1993 |
| Coming Out as Parents | David K. Switzer | 1996 |
| Coming Out to Parents | Mary V. Borhek | 1983 |
| Free Your Mind | Ellen Bass | 1996 |
| Gay Youth | Video | 1992 |
| Growing Up Gay | Rita Reed | 1997 |
| Joining the Tribe | Linnea A. Due | 1995 |
| Like Coming Home | Video | 1988 |
| Now That You Know | Betty Fairchild | 1979 |
| Out | Video | 1993 |
| Outing Yourself | Michelangelo Signorile | 1995 |
| Parents Matter | Ann Muller | 1987 |
| Passages of Pride | Kurt Chandler | 1995 |
| Prayers for Bobby | Leroy Aarons | 1995 |
| School's Out | Video | 1996 |
| Straight Parents, Gay Children | Robert Bernstein | 1995 |
| The Family Heart | Robb Forman Dew | 1994 |
| The Journey Out | Rachel Pollack | 1995 |
| The Shared Heart | Adam Mastoon | 1997 |
| Two Teenagers in Twenty | Video | 1994 |
| Understanding Sexual Identity | Janice E. Rensch | 1990 |

The above are all available from Calgary Public Library.

Fiction for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Author</u> | <u>Pub.</u> |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Not The Only One | Anthology | 1995 |
| Am I Blue? | Marion Dane Bauer | 1994 |
| Baby Be-Bop | Francesca Lia Block | 1995 |
| Letters from the Closet | Tony Ferrante | 1994 |
| Annie on my Mind | Nancy Garden | 1982 |
| Good Moon Rising | Nancy Garden | 1996 |
| Deliver us from Evil | M.E. Kerr | 1994 |
| "Hello", I Lied: | M.E. Kerr | 1997 |
| Peter | Kate Walker | 1991 |
| Twelve Days in August | Liza Ketchum Murrow | 1993 |

The above are all available from Calgary Public Library.



RESOURCES

CALGARY - Social Support

AIDS Calgary

Suite 200, 1509 Center St. S. Calgary, AB T2G 2EG
Call for current programs & support, (403) 508-2500

Bearback Calgary

Box 82064, 1400 - 12 Ave. S.W. Calgary, AB T3C 0N0
Calgary's club for bear's & their admirers

CBCA (Calgary Birth Control Association)

304, 301 - 14 St. N.W. Calgary, AB T2N 2A1 (403) 283-5580
Offers individual & group support, information & education

Diversity

Mount Royal College, Calgary, AB
Contact the Student's Association (403) 240-6401
MRC gay, lesbian, bisexual student group

Eden Counselling Services

Jane Oxenbury (403) 240-6401

-**Healing Ourselves:** Support group for survivors of sexual abuse (Sliding scale fee)

Also call Donna Gould (403) 228-1518

G.L.A.S.S. (Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Academic Students & Staff)

312 Old MacEwan Hall, 2500 University Dr. N.W., Calgary, AB T2N 1N4
(403) 220-2872

University of Calgary's support group for gay/lesbian/bisexual academics & students

GLCSA (Gay & Lesbian Community Services Association)

206, 223 - 12 Ave. S.W., Calgary, AB T2R 0G3 (403) 234-8973

Offers services for people questioning their sexual orientation, call for other current programs & support.

- ~ **Apollo: Friends in sports** - bowling, badminton, curling, volleyball
- ~ **Bisexual Network:** a support group which meets once a month.
- ~ **Inside Out:** youth group that meets weekly
- ~ **SHE-Q:** for women questioning their sexuality, meets weekly.
- ~ **Women's Sunday Evening Drop-In:** discussion of relevant topics.
- ~ **ARGRA (Alberta Rockies Gay Rodeo Association)** (403) 541-8140

Gay Fathers (403) 948-6601

Girlfriends

Call Lynn Sloane (403) 262-5340

A journaling therapy group for lesbian & bisexual women with relationship issues.

Integrity

Rev. Jim Picken 1121 - 14 Ave. S.W., Calgary, AB (403) 270-9661

St. Stephen's Anglican Church

Support for gay/lesbian/bisexual Anglicans & friends

Lesbian Mothers Support Society Calgary

(403) 265-6433 Email: high@cadvision.com

MCC Church (Metropolitan Community Church of Calgary)

Box 82054, Scarboro Outlet, Calgary, AB T2C 3M5

The Men's Project

Calgary (403) 819-3775

Peer support & outreach program for men who have sex with men.

PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Calgary

Cate: (403) 286-0806 Email: csnelson@telusplanet.net

Dave and Gail: (403) 277-5227 Email: davidall@telusplanet.net

Susan: (403) 251-1935 Email: morrissm@telusplanet.net

PFLAG 2000

Rick and Deb: (403) 286-4094 Email: pflag@canuck.com

Provides peer support, education & other resources.

The Sharp Foundation

Suite 530, #2 3012 17 Avenue S.W. Calgary, AB T2A 0P9 (403) 272-2912

Provides affordable housing and care to persons living with HIV/AIDS.

CALGARY - Educational Services

Calgary Women's Health Collective

Counselling & Referrals (403) 263-4619

Outlooks Magazine

Website: <http://www.outlooks.ab.ca>

Box 439, 100, 1039 - 17 Ave S.W. Calgary, AB T2T 0B2

Ph: (403) 228-1157 Fax: (403) 228-7735 Toll Free: 1-888-228-1157

Email: outlook@cadvision.com

Planned Parenthood Alberta

Website: <http://www.plannedparenthoodalberta.com>

304, 301 - 14 St. N.W. Calgary, AB T2N 2A1

Ph: (403) 283-8591 Fax: (403) 270-3209 Email: ppa@cadvision.com

PPA supports reproductive choice and promotes sexual health for all Albertans. PPA works to support the equality of all individuals in matters of sexual health cognizant of human dignity and diversity.

Pride Calgary

(403) 777-9499 Toll Free in Alberta 1-877-2011

Rainbow Pride Resource Centre

L100, 822 - 11 Ave S.W. Calgary, AB T2R 0E5

Ph: (403) 266-5685 Fax: (403) 266-5604

Retail and information.

Southern Alberta Clinic

213, 906 - 8 Ave S.W. Calgary, AB T2N 2A1 (403) 234-2399

Free & confidential services.

EDMONTON - Social Support/Education

Affirm (United Church Lesbian and Gays)

c/o NW Conference Office - United Church 9911 - 48 Ave Edmonton, AB
(780) 435-3992

Alberta PFLAG Faith Society

Ellen: (780) 465-3057 or Lawrence: (780) 435-7142
Email: romona@telusplanet.net

Bisexual Support Group

Website: <http://www.angelfire.com/ab/thepurplehaze>
(780) 913-3076 Email: purplehaze@briefcase.com

Equal Alberta

(780) 488-3234 or 1-877-822-2011 ext. 2019
Email: equalalberta@hotmail.com

Greater Edmonton Pride Pages

12018 - 96 St. Edmonton, AB T6G 0V8
(780) 474-6385 or 1-877-882-2011 ext. 2035

HIV Network of Edmonton

600, 10242 - 105 St. Edmonton, AB T5J 3L5 (780) 488-5742
Email: mail@hivedmonton.com

Gay Men's Outreach Crew, Living Positive, & Queen Sighting Network

(780) 482-5742 (HIV Edmonton)

(780) 488-3234 (Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton)

PFLAG-T (Parents & Friends of Lesbians, Gays & Transgendered People)

Lynne (780) 462-5958 or 1-877-822-2011 ext. 2043
Email: plflag@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca

Metropolitan Community Church

10086 MacDonald Drive, Edmonton, AB (780) 429-2321

Planned Parenthood Edmonton

(780) 423-3737 Email: ppae@freenet.ab.ca

A community based organization providing support & education for individuals & groups concerning sexuality. School & community based anti-homophobia project.

The Police Liaison Committee

Website: <http://www.freenet.edmonton.ab.ca/glcce/police.htm>
(780) 421-2277 Email: glcce@compusmart.ab.ca

Outreach

Website: <http://www.ualberta.ca/outreach/>
1-877-882-2011 ext. 2029 Email: outreach@ualberta.ca
Box 75, Students Union Building U of A Edmonton, T6G 2J7

Youth Understanding Youth

Website: <http://www.freenet.edmonton.ab.ca/glcce/youty.htm>
CLCCE at (780) 488-3234 or 1-877-882-2011 ext. 2023
Email: yuyedm@hotmail.com

Womonspace

Website: <http://www.gaycanada.com/womonspace>
(780) 482-1794 or 1-877-882-2011 ext. 2041
Email: angelaw@compusmart.ab.ca

ALBERTA - Social Support/Education**Fort McMurray, Freedom (GLBT)**

(780) 715-4237 Email: padremarc@hotmail.com

Grande Prairie, Alberta Community

Box 1492 Grande Prairie, AB T8V 4Z3 Email: pellerin@gpre.ab.ca
South Peace AIDS Council, Grande Prairie (780) 538-3388

High Level, Northern Alberta Support Group

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/park/7702>
(780) 926-3989 Email: naltagaygroup@hotmail.com

Lacombe, Just People Equal Rights Society

Box 1604, Lacombe, AB (780) 341-5490

Lethbridge, HIV Connection

1206 - 6 Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB Ph: (403) 328-8186 Fax: (403) 328-8564
~ **PFLAG Lethbridge** (403) 320-1446

Medicine Hat, Planned Parenthood Alberta

210, 535 - 3 St. SE Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0H2 (403) 526-6111

Medicine Hat, SOS (Sexual Orientation Support for LESBIGAY Youth)

phone: (403) 527-7099 fax: (403) 529-3927

LEGIT 1-877-882-2011 ext. 2017

EGALE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere)

306, 177 Nepean St. Ottawa Ontario, K2P 0B4
(613) 230-1043 Fax: (613) 237-6651

Planned Parenthood Alberta (PPA), in partnership with PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Calgary and members of the gay, lesbian and bisexual community worked together to revise and produce this booklet for Alberta's GLBT youth, their parents, families and friends.

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To order more copies of this booklet or for information about other booklets and pamphlets for GLBT youth, parents, families and friends please contact:

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3312 Centre B Street N.W.
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