

*Where Can I
Get Help?*



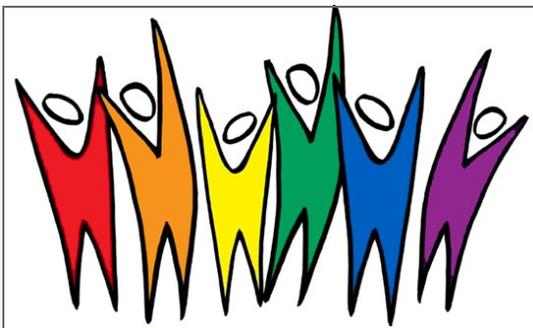
Roger Williams University

Health Services

CDS 220
(401) 245 -3156

Counseling Center:

CDS 200
(401) 254-3124



- L- Lesbian**
- G- Gay**
- B- Bisexual**
- T- Transgender**
- Q- Questioning**



*Community,
Concerns,
&
Questions*



Health Education Office
Center or Student Develop-
ment
Room 2011
(401) 254-3413

You Are Not Alone

LOVE?



While many LGBTQ individuals do not fully understand their sexual or gender identity until adolescence later, such as in college, most grow up with an awareness that they are somehow different, and with some unclear ideas

about what that difference might be. Most commonly, LGBTQs grow up in an environment that covertly, and sometimes overtly, makes them feel that they are bad people, second-class citizens, abnormal, or morally wrong. Whatever the message, these individuals can be vulnerable while questioning their identities and often do so in isolation. When they do find a way to recognize, and perhaps label their differences, it is done without the tools required to integrate this new information into their overall identity in an integrated way. Many LGBTQs feel that they must remain hidden and invisible for fear of rejection, maltreatment, and discrimination. It can be quite stressful living in a society where homophobia and heterosexism still exists on a large scale.

Common Health Issues in the LGBTQ Community:

- *Depression*
- *Substance abuse*
- *Problems with family*
- *Relationship issues*

Coming Out:

For LGBTQ people, “coming out” is a complex process of understanding, accepting, and valuing one’s sexual and/or gender identity. Coming out includes both exploring one’s identity and sharing that identity with others. It also involves coping with societal responses and attitudes toward LGBTQ people. LGBTQ individuals are forced to come to terms with what it means to be different in a society that tends to assume everyone to be heterosexual and gender conforming. The coming out process is very personal. This process happens in different ways and occurs at different ages for different people. It is usually advisable to come out first to those who are most likely to be supportive. It also is important to remember that, sometimes, coming out may not be the best option (i.e., when physical safety is a concern, or if family cultural values conflict with coming out).



If you are gay, lesbian or bisexual, or think you might be, it may be helpful to keep in mind the following suggestions as you move toward self acceptance:

- Coming out is a life-long process. You have the right to choose when, where and to whom you come out. Use caution and test the waters. Talk about gay issues first to see the reactions of significant others in your life.
- Don't expect immediate acceptance. Many people will be surprised by your revelation. They may need time to adjust and to re-examine old stereotypes and myths.
- If you are rejected by someone after coming out, don't lose sight of your own self worth. Remember, you are just as valuable and worthy as you were before you told that person
- Clarify your own feelings about your sexuality before sharing them with others

Remember that coming out may be a difficult process and may require the assistance of a counselor or support group. LGBTQ people are a potential natural support system because they have all experienced at least some of the steps in the process of coming out.