

A Cross-Sectional Study of the Beliefs,  
Practices and Circumstances of Gay Women  
In a Small Southern Town and How They  
Compare in Each Decade of Life From  
Teens to the End of the Life Continuum

A Study of Same-Sex Experiences

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty  
Of the American Academy of Clinical  
Sexologists at Maimonides University  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

For the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

By  
Kate Markley

North Miami Beach, Florida

2003

## DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This dissertation submitted by Kate Markley has been read and approved by three faculty members of the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists at Maimonides University.

The final copies have been examined by the Dissertation Committee and the signatures which appear here verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given the final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signature

Date

---

William Granzig, Ph.D., MPH, FAACA  
Professor and Dean  
Chairman

---

Paul Thompson, Ed.D.  
Committee Member

---

Ruth Hunt, Ph.D.  
Adjunct Professor

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank William Granzig, Ph.D., The American Academy of Clinical Sexologists and Maimonides University for your vision and support—the right program at the right time.

Thank you Dr. Paul Thompson for your ongoing critique which helped shape and sharpen the paper immeasurably – a true mentor and friend for twenty-one years.

Thank you Janice Cothorn for your relentless diligence in typing and talking the paper every minute step of the way – an exemplary friend since high school and through the Bachelor, Masters and now PhD.

Thank you Nancy Roberts for your unending patience and support and for everything, more than words can say – my partner and friend for twelve years.

Thank you family and friends for your confidence and cheering me on.

## Vita

Kate Markley is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in Lakeland, Florida. She has a Masters Degree in Social Work from Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida and is completing her Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Clinical Sexology at Maimonides University in North Miami Beach, Florida. She is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers and has a Diplomate in Clinical Social Work and a Diplomate in Clinical Sexology.

She works with individuals and couples dealing with a variety of family, relationship and sexuality issues and is Area Coordinator for the Florida State University School of Social Work.

## ABSTRACT

This study examined the views, values, practices, circumstances and life experiences of gay women in a small southern town at one point in time and how they compare in each decade of life from teens to the end of the life continuum. The study was designed to explore the real life situation of these women's sense of fear, identity, relationships, religion and sexuality as they live their daily lives. Data was gathered through a survey consisting of ninety-eight questions designed to address these five aspects of life concerning these women. The surveys were distributed to local organizations and meeting places of gay women with stamped, addressed return envelopes and received over a ten-week period in the fall of 2002.

The sample consisted of forty-eight respondents ranging in age from teens to seventies. Respondents were separated into age groups by decade to facilitate comparison over the life span. Respondents were also separated into two broad age groups, the older and the younger, to facilitate comparison of respondents' socialization before and after the 1970's which serves as a benchmark for change in social thinking regarding homosexuality. A collective profile of gay women in one community at one point in time is presented with an exploration of how they are impacted by social changes in the larger community.

## CONTENTS

DISSERTATION APPROVAL . . . . .	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iii
VITA . . . . .	iv
ABSTRACT . . . . .	v
CONTENTS . . . . .	vi
PART I: INTRODUCTION . . . . .	2
PART II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
CHAPTER 1    FEAR . . . . .	5
CHAPTER 2    IDENTITY . . . . .	16
CHAPTER 3    RELATIONSHIPS . . . . .	25
CHAPTER 4    RELIGION . . . . .	38
CHAPTER 5    SEXUALITY . . . . .	47
PART III: STUDY CONSTRUCT	
CHAPTER 6    PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY . . . . .	61
CHAPTER 7    DEMOGRAPHICS . . . . .	63
PART IV: ANALYSIS OF DATA	
A.    TABLE OF SURVEY RESULTS . . . . .	68
B.    ANALYSIS OF AGE GROUPS – OLDER AND YOUNGER	
CHAPTER 8    FEAR . . . . .	89
CHAPTER 9    IDENTITY . . . . .	99
CHAPTER 10    RELATIONSHIPS . . . . .	112
CHAPTER 11    RELIGION . . . . .	134
CHAPTER 12    SEXUALITY . . . . .	148
C.    ANALYSIS OF AGE GROUPS – BY DECADE	
CHAPTER 13    AGE UNDER 20 . . . . .	167
CHAPTER 14    AGE 21 – 29. . . . .	176
CHAPTER 15    AGE 30 – 39. . . . .	193
CHAPTER 16    AGE 40 – 49. . . . .	213
CHAPTER 17    AGE 50 – 59. . . . .	241
CHAPTER 18    AGE OVER 60 . . . . .	267

PART V: CONCLUSIONS . . . . . 280

APPENDIX:

    1. SURVEY . . . . . 284

SELECTED REFERENCES: . . . . . 299

PART I

INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

Fear or anxiety affects one's sense of acceptance and inhibits one's participation and performance to a large degree. Fear can have a generalized or specific etiology. For most gay women, fear is part of their daily reality as they work, interact with others and live their lives. Two areas in particular are of significant concern for gay women. Virtually all gay women struggle with the conflicting dilemma of coming out and being found out or attempting to remain in the closet. For most, this requires a delicate balancing act requiring thought, energy and selective revelation of self which to a degree diminishes resources and authenticity. Generally, there is some combination of these alternatives in which gay women come out to some people, are found out by other people and attempt to remain in the closet around still other people which necessitates some effort to remain invisible or hide a significant aspect of who they are. This works in partnership with people who either make the heterosexual assumption or participate in the don't ask/don't tell conspiracy. This is an ongoing process throughout life and must be repeated with every new person the gay woman meets. Granted, heterosexual women are not compelled to announce or deny their sexual orientation to everyone they meet and in that sense, the homosexual woman isn't either. The difference is that, although perhaps decreasing, people are presumed heterosexual which simultaneously implies normalcy of the norm and deviance of the different. The statistical, and, for many, the moral, norm is heterosexuality which conveys acceptance of heterosexuality and rejection of non-heterosexuality. At the extreme, this can take the form of violence which compounds

the risks and repercussions. These are very high stakes for the gay woman, who like everyone else with the human condition, sees affirmation of her self as somewhat contingent upon the acceptance of others. That is not to diminish in any way the importance of self-affirmation and self-acceptance. Rather, it is only to recognize the necessity and importance of affirmation and acceptance from external as well as internal sources. No one lives in a vacuum or in isolation. We are tied to one another as part of our humanity. What others think and say matters. Certainly, the overall, consistent theme of what is thought and said by others matters to each. A prevailing theme of negative judgment and rejection by others produces a pervasive sense of fear which necessitates various accommodations that are not required of others. Equally important, fear of negative judgment and rejection produces the same results. Perceived or actual rejection is oppressive. In this atmosphere, gay women decide daily whether to reveal or conceal their true identity.

PART II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## CHAPTER 1

### FEAR

At the outset of any discourse, it seems appropriate to ensure common understanding and consensus of the meaning of the terms employed and under study. The term lesbian, while seemingly clear in meaning and concept among the populace, is surprisingly challenging to conceptualize for the researcher. The much acclaimed Kinsey scale serves as a reference point (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin and Gebhard, 1953). This heterosexual-homosexual likert-type rating scale measures each individual on a scale from zero (exclusively heterosexual) to six (exclusively homosexual) which shows what proportion of psychologic reactions and/or overt behavior is heterosexual and what proportion is homosexual. The ratings represent a balance between the homosexual and heterosexual aspects of an individual's history rather than the intensity of psychosexual reactions or absolute amount of overt experience. Individuals in each category may have had various and diverse amounts of overt experience. The ratings depend on the psychologic reactions of the individual and on the amount of overt experience. Since the psychologic and overt aspects of any history often parallel each other, they may be given equal weight in determining a rating. An individual may receive a rating for any particular period of life, whether it be the whole span or some smaller portion of it. The scale provides seven categories and includes individuals of every intermediate type, lying in a continuum between the two extremes and between each and every category on the scale.

In effect, the two extreme ends of the scale reflect exclusive heterosexuality and homosexuality according to the criteria above. The two categories adjacent to each of those extremes reflect varying preponderance of psychosexual responses and/or overt experiences toward individuals of the opposite or same sex, respectively. The middle category reflects those individuals who are about equally heterosexual and homosexual in their psychologic responses and overt experiences (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin and Gebhard, 1953). The Kinsey scale is replicated on the following page.

Golden (1987) was the first to propose a multidimensional model of sexual orientation. She maintains that sexual identity (I am a lesbian), sexual behavior (I have sex with women) and community participation (I am a member of the lesbian community) are orthogonal dimensions that may be congruent or incongruent. Thus it is possible to self-identify as a lesbian but be currently celibate or to never have had a sexual experience with another woman. Further, women who self-identify as bisexual or heterosexual may be active in lesbian community activities for various reasons. Morris (1997) contends that two additional dimensions are relevant. He examines the importance of extent of disclosure of sexual orientation to others and length of time of self-identity as a lesbian. He points out that some self-identified lesbians have disclosed their sexual orientation to few other people and are assumed to be heterosexual. He also maintains that the length of time that a lesbian has been aware of her sexual orientation may affect these other dimension such as degree of outness to other people or participation in lesbian community events.

These five dimensions of lesbianism appear to be the most salient and consistently recognized foundational basis for the study of lesbians. Increasingly, researchers seem to prefer some combination of these aspects in their efforts to reach out to lesbians to participate in surveys. This is difficult at best. The literature is replete with observations about the heterogeneity of women's sexual orientation in general, that being lesbian is not a homogeneous experience and that the categories of lesbian and bisexual are more fluid and continuous than is generally assumed (Morris and Rothblum, 1999). Although the definition of lesbian is fraught with all the

encumbrances elucidated, for purposes of this paper, lesbians are who they say they are.

Interestingly, lesbian is the only sexual term used as a label as well as a description of someone. A female homosexual is referred to as a lesbian. There is no commensurate word for a female heterosexual. Male homosexuals are often referred to as gay but not as *a gay*. Similarly, there is no word for male heterosexuals. The term gay actually refers to male and female homosexuals and the term straight refers to male and female heterosexuals. In all of these instances, the terms are descriptive or adjectives rather than labels or nouns, as is lesbian.

The term lesbian evolved from the much-proclaimed Golden Age of Greece in the Sixth Century, B.C. It was during this period that Sappho, the famous poetess, maintained a school for girls on the Island of Lesbos, hence, the term lesbian, in the Aegean Sea. Sappho wrote poetry glorifying love between women, was a proponent of women's rights and schooled her students in poetry, art, music and dance. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the category of the lesbian, or female introvert, was formulated by sexologists and deemed abnormal (Faderman, 1991).

The mental health model that dominated the twentieth century viewed lesbianism as a mental illness. According to Rose (2002), that meant that research on lesbianism focused primarily on one of two areas—either the causes of sexual orientation or the psychological abnormality of lesbianism. Subsequent research by Hooker (1957) and others, debunked the idea that homosexuality was a mental illness. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the lexicon of mental

illness in the DSM, The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1973). For the first time, homosexuality was viewed by the professional community as behavior other than abnormality and diagnosis and treatment were relegated to the past. The only subsequent remnant in the DSM, not even identifying homosexuality or lesbianism per se, is 302.9 Sexual Disorder not otherwise specified which includes persistent and marked distress about sexual orientation (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The resulting view is that homosexuality or lesbianism, itself is not pathology. Rather, one's discomfort rising to significant proportions sufficient to interfere with one's overall life functioning is the only pathology. The root cause of this discomfort is seen as external rather than internal. In essence, the distress results from societal prejudice and discrimination and familial ostracism rather than the individual's innate distaste and self-rejection over his or her homosexuality. The dissonance is thus the result of external, rather than internal forces.

Further research revealed that lesbian and heterosexual women were similar in psychological functioning, gender roles, sexual behavior and relationship priorities (Thompson, McCandless and Strickland, 1971; Peplau, 2001 and Peplau and Garnets, 2000). Research no longer focused exclusively on why a woman was a lesbian. Instead, research focused on gender and sexual orientation and how they affected the development of relationships and sexual behavior (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983 and Kurdek, 1994). Lesbianism began to be seen as a sexual variation rather than pathology (Rose, 2002).

Current research is directed at the total life experience, the quintessence, of lesbian women. For the first time, there is an erstwhile effort to fully understand and promulgate the true, multi-dimensional aspects of lesbian women and their lives. Inherent is the assumption that lesbian relationships are natural and normal (Rose, 2002). Be that as it may, much societal negativity continues to surround lesbianism. This negativity has improved substantially over the past two decades and has never been as rampant as societal negativity, even revulsion, toward male homosexuality. Nevertheless, societal reaction ranging from ambivalence to condemnation continues toward homosexuality in general which lesbians do not escape. Such societal negativity has considerable impact on lesbians and every aspect of their daily lives. In particular, lesbians report varying degrees of generalized fear or apprehension as they interact with people, varying levels of comfort with their identity as a lesbian, varying qualities and satisfaction in their relationships with all of the significant people in their lives, varying degrees of religious incongruence and rejection and varying views and values regarding sexuality. In most respects, this is considered due to society's stigmatization of lesbianism as evidenced in society's attitude and conduct toward lesbians.

The process of coming out to others regarding one's lesbianism is a complex, ongoing process which continues over the life span of the individual. This process begins with first coming to terms or coming out as a lesbian to one's own self. This is no small accomplishment. The ever present homophobia in society is effectively internalized in people who are homosexual as well as heterosexual. Further, this generally occurs before individuals recognize their own sexual orientation (McGregor,

Carver, Antoni, Weiss, Yount and Ironson, 2001). When homosexuals become aware of their homosexuality, they experience toward themselves the attitudes they have internalized (Herek, 1996). The resulting internalized homophobia is a source of great distress as one grapples with feelings of being different and fears of being found out. The first, often monumental, developmental task in the coming out process is to wrestle and resolve the realization, often displayed on parade placards, that *we are the people our parents warned us against*. The development of effective coping skills is crucial. For many, this task is never fully accomplished and the lesbian woman goes through life with, at best, ambivalence or, at worst, self-recrimination. For some, the struggle results in impaired psychological adjustment or even suicide.

The second developmental task in the coming out process is to come out or disclose one's lesbianism to certain significant others in one's life. Much anxiety is innate to the disclosure of one's lesbianism. Yet, the communication of one's sexual orientation to significant others is deemed a prerequisite to the emergence of a positive homosexual identity (Wells and Kline, 1987). Inherent in this communication is the critical decision of whom to tell, how to tell, what to tell and when to tell. The fundamental question becomes, is the person tellable, meaning, are they accepting and are they trustworthy. Disclosure of one's lesbianism is dependent upon one's perceptions of a positive recipient response or a high trust level (Wells and Kline, 1987). Miscalculations of judgment in these areas can be devastating with far-reaching and life-altering consequences. As a result, many lesbians elect to remain in the closet rather than come out of it. This choice is not without its repercussions either. Fischer (1972) acknowledged that each time homosexuals deny their sexual

orientation, they hurt themselves slightly which has a cumulative effect on their energies and vitality. Such self-denial further impairs one's overall functioning and thus contribution to society, which, ironically and perhaps ultimately, suffers most. In the final analysis, the lesbian woman is left to choose between that which is threatening and that which is destructive.

The third developmental task in the process of coming out is going on which includes fashioning a fulfilling and productive life in the face of societal adversity. This is essentially an on-going, never-ending process and involves a series of decisions, actions and interactions over the life span. Both fundamental and overarching, the decisions consist of being involved or being invisible. Going on entails maximizing one's potential, life experiences and relationships which in large part necessitates a relentless assessment of others one meets throughout life and a relentless revelation of intimate information about one's self. This is tantamount to continuously hurling oneself into the abyss with no sure knowledge before-hand of the outcome. This requires keen assessment skills, a great deal of energy and considerable risk, not to mention dealing with loss, rejection and negative consequences, should they occur.

At the same time, there is often a certain resistance regarding the need for revelation of what is perceived as deeply personal, intimate information. There is no comparable exacting process for heterosexuals, causing many homosexuals to hide in large part behind the heterosexual assumption. Many lesbian women thus choose denial, passing as heterosexual, or participating in the don't ask/don't tell conspiracy.

For some lesbian women, the safest approach is denial of their lesbianism. Again, denial, rather than affirmation, of one's own self comes at great cost to one's sense of and acceptance of self. Some lesbian women believe that passing as heterosexual, at least in the public domain, is the best approach. This necessitates the accomplishment of a certain charade or double life which in itself is both burdensome and cumbersome. Many lesbian women, if only by default, become participants in the don't ask/don't tell conspiracy. In essence, they presume their lesbianism is obvious and known to others but confirmation is neither volunteered by the lesbian woman nor sought by others for reasons of their own which are also complex. Even in this day of heightened awareness and enlightenment, there are many who do not suspect or, perhaps more accurately, do not stop to consider the sexual orientation of others. Increasingly, many people surmise the sexual orientation of someone but don't confront it, often out of respect and in the belief that the lesbian woman must not want to acknowledge it or because it doesn't matter to them anyway. There are also many people who truly do not want to know, either because they feel it is not their business or because they could not accept it if confirmed. That someone may be lesbian also means that they may not be, and, for many, this is more palatable. It is an arguably ideal situation in which the lesbian woman is neither called upon to announce nor to deny her lesbianism.

In all of these instances, secrecy shrouds and diminishes the relationship. At minimal, there is an inherent unspoken lack of confidence in each toward the other which effectively culminates in distrust which is often a precursor for disdain. Ultimately, the continuous double-bind is to disclose one's lesbianism in order to

develop and deepen relationships by making them open and honest, or not disclose for fear of rejection and the compelling need for self-preservation. A further outgrowth of all this is the continuing paucity of role models to help debunk prevailing stereotypes about lesbianism which can then only persist and the cycle continues.

## CHAPTER 2

### IDENTITY

Sexual orientation identity formation is a unique developmental task for lesbian, gay and bisexual adolescents and young adults (Floyd and Stein, 2002). A number of models describing the phases of this process have been proffered. Troiden (1989) proposes a four-stage model that consists of sensitization, identity confusion, identity assumption and commitment. Sensitization generally occurs during adolescence or early adulthood and involves exploration of identity and heterosexual socialization as well as one's possible membership in a stigmatized social category (Cass, 1996; D'Augelli, 1996). Identity confusion consists of inner turmoil over sexual orientation. For many, there is resistance or suppression. The initial same-gender sexual contact is seen as a critical event that is usually experienced as a revelation, awakening or confirmation of sexual identity (Savin-Williams, 1998). Identity assumption occurs when the individual assumes the self-definition as gay, lesbian or bisexual and begins the process of selective disclosure of sexual orientation. Commitment occurs when the individual takes on her sexual orientation as a way of life. In addition to the first involvement in a same-sex relationship, there is further disclosure to a wider range of heterosexuals. The ultimate disclosure, to a parent, signals integration of sexual orientation identity with the heterosocial world of the family (Boxer, Cook and Herdt, 1991). The individual also increases socialization and immersion into the gay community. Identity synthesis, or consolidation, occurs when the individual develops a sense of self-acceptance and integration of inner self and public identity. For most, this overall process is said to begin in early childhood and conclude in the early

twenties, though there is much diversity of experience. For many there is later onset and slower progress through the stages. In general, the trajectory begins earlier and proceeds more smoothly when there is social and familial support. In many instances, these individuals emerge with relatively positive attitudes about themselves and their orientation (Floyd and Stein, 2002).

Savin-Williams (1990) found that early awareness of same gender attractions by lesbians was associated with relatively high levels of self-esteem. Conversely, D'Augelli and Hershberger, (1993), found that the resulting negative social stressors could cause increased inner turmoil and that suicide attempts are linked to early awareness of same-gender attraction, early self-labeling and involvement in same-gender relationships and early disclosure to a family member.

Social pressures, familial values and moral beliefs serve as constraints that lead the individual to implement denial or avoidant strategies, such as heterosexual immersion, to cope with identity confusion (Cass, 1979; Troiden, 1989). Successful resolution of identity confusion is a prerequisite to identity assumption and commitment and ultimately to a positive integration of sexual orientation identity. Lack of such resolution and integration is anathema to good mental health and maximum functioning. In the last analysis, denial, or even compartmentalization, is antithetical to the desired goal of synthesis of public and private self which is predicated on acceptance by self and others.

The single root of all this is homophobia, which Wright and Cullen (2001) define as the irrational fear and hatred of homosexual individuals. Social institutions are formulated on compulsory heterosexuality which promotes homophobia. This occurs

in part due to fear of differences and their perceived threat to the fabric of society. Previous research has demonstrated that social contact with homosexual individuals can actually serve to decrease homophobia (Lance, 1994; Serdahely and Ziemba, 1984). The reduction in homophobia occurs when myths and stereotypes are dispelled and people learn that they need not fear or avoid individuals who are homosexual (Wright and Cullen, 2001).

Various studies have associated homophobia with negative attitudes toward women (Henley and Pincus, 1978), increased sexual anxiety and guilt (Dunbar, Brown and Amoroso, 1974, Yarber and Yee, 1983), cognitive rigidity (MacDonald and Games, 1974) and negative attitudes toward other minorities (Henley and Pincus, 1978). On too many occasions, such negative attitudes or prejudice result in negative behaviors ranging from discrimination and harassment to ostracism to hate crimes including rape, battery and even murder. All of this serves as the back drop for the exploration and establishment of the lesbian identity. To negotiate these murky matters is of no small consequence, yet they must be.

The principal facilitator of this process is a pressing need for congruence in awareness, acceptance and affirmation of one's identity. Some lesbians acknowledge an awareness of feeling different in childhood and as early as age five while most gain awareness in adolescence or young adulthood and some as late as mid-life, perhaps even during or following heterosexual marriages.

Saghir and Robins (1973) found that lesbian women were substantially more likely than heterosexual women to recollect having been tomboys as children. Grellert, Newcomb and Bentler (1987), reported that lesbian women engaged before the age of

thirteen in male-stereotypic sports including baseball and football and non-athletic play including playing with motors or making models, having been in fights, playing with boys rather than with girls and having been a loner. Bailey, Willerman and Parks, (1991), Whitman and Mathy (1991) and Phillips and Over (1995) ascertained that lesbian women recalled having engaged in gender nonconforming behaviors in childhood. Such behaviors included imagining oneself as a male character, preferring boy's games and toys, preferring boys clothes, having been considered a tomboy and feeling like a boy or man.

Butch and femme roles have been part of lesbian culture since the nineteenth century (Faderman, 1981). Butch is the lesbian slang term for women who feel more comfortable with masculine gender roles, styles or identities than with feminine ones, whereas femme refers to lesbians who appear characteristically feminine (Rubin, 1992). Butch and femme essentially involve norms for appearance and attractiveness including dress, grooming, mannerisms, style and general presentation and are based on masculine, feminine socialization (Krakauer and Rose, 2002). These mandates are developed within the lesbian subculture (Myers, Taub, Morris and Rothblum, 1999).

The stereotypical lesbian couple consists of one butch and one femme (Smith and Stillman, 2002) and is an imitation of masculine and feminine roles associated with traditional heterosexual couples (Rubin, 1992; Ennis, 1998). This has historically been due to lack of lesbian role models and lesbians unknowingly buying into and thus perpetuating prevailing societal misconceptions. Over time, many if not most lesbians have assumed an androgynous, or more neutral, appearance and partner preference. Although butch/femme roles have endured over time, they have ebbed and flowed and

other constellations, such as butch/butch, femme/femme and independent or neutral with no preference for partner descriptor have appeared (Loulan, 1990, Ennis and Lloyd, 1995, Stein 1992; Faderman 1981; Weber 1996; Bailey, Kim, Hills and Linsenmeier 1997). All of these dichotomies embody self-identification and partner preference. Increasingly, these labels are being dispensed with in favor of personal qualities which are real rather than stereotypical characteristics which are images.

In the past, butch/femme roles theoretically made it easier for lesbian women to find each other. In reality, this was fraught with problems. There is no fool-proof *gaydar* which allows lesbian women to find other lesbian women. In addition, the identification of femmes is thwarted by their relative invisibility as they often pass as straight women. Other factors including social class, education and personal values influence the acceptability of butch/femme roles. Overall, there is greater diversity in the lesbian community (Rothblum, 1994). Nevertheless, butch/femme roles have not disappeared and are desirable for a segment of lesbians (Smith and Stillman, 2002).

A long time, highly charged debate has ensued and an endless array of theories have been promulgated as to the causality of lesbianism. Theories of origin include various aspects of genetics and learned behavior which fall under the rubric of nature versus nurture. From the existing literature, it seems that no single factor determines whether a person will identify as heterosexual or homosexual (Golombok and Tasker, 1996). Be that as it may, there is growing consensus that lesbians are created or born lesbians rather than making it a conscious choice.

Despite the uncertain origin and the certain obstacles regarding lesbianism, the vast majority of lesbian women come to a resolution with their lesbianism and manage its

effective coalescence in their lives. At a point, origin and obstacles pale in importance. Lesbians simply *know they know they know* they are lesbians and come to believe that ultimately it is most important for them to accept and be true to this reality. Most then maintain that they are glad that they are gay and that they would not rather be straight other than a cursory concession that it would be easier to be straight, given the larger culture and its stigmatization of lesbianism. They also acknowledge that if that were the case, they would no longer be who they are. Many further feel stronger and more resilient as a result of their internal search and external struggles. For many, guilt, confusion and shame are formidable foes to be reckoned with. Most come to the awareness that these feelings are the result of external forces fomented as homophobia.

Consistent with the genetic theory of lesbianism causality, it is noteworthy that many lesbians report having or suspect having one or more homosexual relatives, frequently in the maternal line. The growing social climate of acceptance has permitted this burgeoning of knowledge which previously, and to a lesser degree currently, has been precluded by isolationism steeped in the need for self-protection and self-preservation. In essence, homophobia is so deeply and effectively entrenched, that even family members remain invisible to each other. This is completely antithetical to contentions that lesbians proselytize or use seduction to increase their ranks or garner sexual conquests.

A strong lesbian identity and enhanced comfort level leads many lesbian women to identify with and participate in various activities which further promote identity, acceptance and association with other lesbian women which further reinforces the

cycle. Such activities include watching gay movies, reading gay books and magazines, going to gay bars, campgrounds and resorts. The need for such outlets which promote positive images of gays are seen as essential for many lesbian women to allow self-expression and facilitate association with other lesbian women.

Conversely, a weaker lesbian identity and diminished comfort level frequently result in such anomalies as depression, suicide and anomie as well as a generalized sense of poor well being. According to DSM IV criteria, as many as twenty-five percent of all women experience a major depressive episode at some point in their lives (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Women are said to have an increased risk for depression due to a number of social, economic, biological and emotional factors (McGrath, Strickland and Russo, 1990). Lesbian women in particular tend to enter therapy more often, likely due to the increased number of stressors they face (Gibson, 1996; Morgan, 1992; Tait, 1997) which include lack of social support, past or present abuse or trauma and being a member of an oppressed or marginalized group (McGrath, Strickland and Russo, 1990). Collier (1982) suggests that the extra burden carried by lesbian women is not due to their sexual orientation, rather it is due to the discrimination their sexual orientation brings them. Rothblum (1990) cites being closeted as a lesbian may place lesbians at risk for depression. Lesbians often receive less social support from their families than heterosexual women because of heterosexism and the stigma associated with their sexual orientation (Kurdek and Schmitt, 1987; Wayment and Peplau, 1995). Markowe (1996) notes that many lesbians feel that sexual orientation is not easy to talk about and never discuss their

sexual orientation after coming out to family or friends. Many lesbians are not out of the closet at work (Fassinger, 1991).

Factors that mitigate lesbian depression include creation of alternative networks of friends and the lesbian community (Wayment and Peplau, 1995), having partners (Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Tait, 1997) and openness about their sexual orientation (Gartrell, 1984, Jordan, 1995) as well as social support from family and friends (Ayala and Coleman, 2000).

Research suggests that lesbians may face unique physical and mental health risks and that sexual identity and the social context have implications for well being. Hostile environments, characterized by animosity toward lesbians because they do not conform to heteronormative gender expectations, are associated with distress over lesbian identity and with physical and mental health problems. Conversely, supportive environments facilitate positive lesbian identity and enhance well-being (Kaminski, 2000). Lesbians often struggle to obtain adequate health care (Lorde, 1980; Stevens, 1993, 1998; Trippet and Bain, 1993) and then often withhold their sexual orientation from health care providers. Many lesbians simply forgo professional care (Stevens, 1993). A significant relationship exists between alienation and poor health (Mirowsky and Ross, 1989) and lesbians in a homophobic society experience unique constraints on health and well-being (Kaminski, 2000).

Of even more concern, lesbians may be at particularly high risk for suicide due to cumulative negative stressors and victimization related to their stigmatized sexual orientation (Hershberger and D'Augelli, 1995). Feared and actual rejection and loss of family and friends are momentous negative forces to be coped with. As a result of

these cumulative stressors, lesbian youths are far more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual peers (Gibson, 1989, Harry, 1989; Martin and Hetrick, 1988). Lesbian youths are also at a greater risk for suicide ideation and attempts (Hershberger and D'Augelli, 1995). The National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation (1987) found that fifty-nine percent of lesbian youths from seventeen to twenty-four years of age had contemplated suicide with twenty-five percent actually making attempts.

Social stigma of homosexuality and discrimination has harmful mental health consequences and results in greater risk for specific psychiatric disorders (Mays and Cochran, 2001). Further, abuse, threat of attacks and assault impact the overall mental health of lesbians. Family support and self acceptance are seen as buffers against the deleterious effects of victimization and thus mediate the relation between victimization and mental health (Hershberger and D'Augelli, 1995). In addition, a link has been established between the coming out process and psychological functioning. A positive coming out process results in high self-esteem while a negative coming out process results in elevated distress (Rosario, Hunter, Maguen, Gwadz and Smith, 2001).

## CHAPTER 3

### RELATIONSHIPS

Much attention has been given to the subject of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, incest, rape and domestic violence in childhood in terms of etiology, treatment and aftermath (Briere and Runtz, 1993, Peters, 1988; Stein, Golding, Siegel, Burnman and Sovenson, 1988; Finkelhor, 1990). There has been greatly heightened public awareness and attention regarding these issues in the past two decades. Some have suggested that adult lesbian identity results at least in part from an earlier abusive experience. Studies have found no association between child sexual abuse and the development of a lesbian sexual preference and, further, that lesbians were no more likely to report a history of sexual abuse than heterosexual women (Bell, Weinberg and Hammersmith, 1981).

Studies have found an association between child abuse and negative health, mental health, educational and economic consequences which have particular implication for lesbian women. Approximately 70% of American women work outside the home and approximately one out of every five families is headed by a woman (Rix, 1990) many of whom are lesbian. Approximately 30% of female employees have experienced child sexual abuse (Hyman, 2000). Lesbian women assume that they have to earn their own living and provide their own support which is greatly impaired by negative health, mental health, educational and economic consequences of child sexual abuse. Despite a woman's motivation to work, her earnings are believed to depend to a large extent on her physical and mental health and her education (Hyman, 2000). The

earlier childhood trauma thus serves to revictimize the adult female, having particular implications for lesbian women and their life quality.

A direct link has been made between the experience of abuse and violence in childhood and its replication in adulthood. Intimate partner violence occurs among heterosexual and homosexual couples and is far too extensive for the comfort and well being of the individual or society. Violence in lesbian relationships is understated for many reasons including homophobia, the intense fear and hatred of lesbians, and heterosexism, the belief that heterosexuality is normative. Previously developed theories conceptualize violence as involving male perpetrators and female victims which contribute to the silence and invisibility of lesbian battering (West, 2002). Many deny the extent of violence among lesbians (Renzetti and Miley, 1996), yet there are many indications of an alarming frequency of interpersonal violence among lesbians (Burke and Follingstad, 1999; West, 1998; Lie, Schilit, Bush, Montagne and Reyes, 1991; Lockhart, White, Causby and Isaac, 1994; Leventhal and Lundy, 1999; Renzetti and Miley, 1996). Physical violence often consists of pushing, shoving and slapping and less frequently consists of beatings and assaults with weapons. Approximately thirty to forty percent of lesbian women are believed to have been involved in at least one relationship where at least one incident of physical abuse occurred. Sexual violence includes forced kissing, breast and genital fondling and oral, anal or vaginal penetration. Estimates of sexual violence in lesbian relationships range from seven to fifty-five percent. Psychological and verbal abuse includes threats, being called names, yelled at and insulted. Incidents of psychological and verbal abuse are believed to be experienced by eighty percent of lesbians in

relationships. Nevertheless, the rates, types and patterns of abuse experienced by battered lesbians in relationships are comparable to those of heterosexual women. At the same time, research is limited and often contradictory (West, 2002). An additional form of abuse experienced by lesbian women is the threat of being outed or having their sexual orientation revealed by an angry partner which can result in a myriad of negative consequences including rejection by family members, loss of children, job and housing (Renzetti, 1998).

All of this is exacerbated by the lack of social support and validation for lesbian relationships which causes many lesbians to establish greater attachments to their partners. This increased sense of intimacy serves as a buffer against discrimination but may cause a fusion or merging which can make it difficult for both partners to feel a sense of independence and separate identity in the relationship which in turn can lead to greater conflict and possible violence (West, 2002; Renzetti, 1998 and Lockhard, White, Causby and Isaac, 1994).

Adolescence in particular is a time for young people to experiment with sexual and romantic feelings and relationships and to expand their awareness of emotionality (Savin-Williams and Berndt, 1990). Dating and romantic relationships constitute important social contexts to explore intimacy and sexuality, rehearse romantic and sexual behaviors, enhance social competence and consolidate one's identity (Furman, Brown and Feiring, 1999; Neeman, Hubbard and Master, 1995). The social context of intimate relationships is less available to lesbian adolescents (Elze, 2002). Fears of physical victimization, verbal harassment, peer rejection and public humiliation further constrain the ability to seek out dating partners and romantic relationships

(Savin-Williams, 1996). Little research has been conducted regarding the importance of adolescent and adult lesbian experiences with dating and falling in love or the nature of their relationships. There appears to be a resiliency in adolescent and adult lesbian women in constructing same-sex dating and romantic experiences, despite societal stigmatization and threats of victimization (Elze, 2002).

The extent to which lesbians follow patterns of heterosexual dating and courtship has not been established and it is believed that these activities as they traditionally occur may not apply to lesbians. Three courtship scripts which describe lesbian couple formation include a romance, friendship and sexually explicit script. The lesbian romance script depicts emotional intimacy and sexual attraction as being intertwined in two women's attraction to each other. The dating phase is very short and rapidly proceeds towards commitment. The friendship script emphasizes emotional intimacy over sexuality and is believed to be the most common courtship script among lesbians. Essentially, the women become friends, fall in love and establish a committed relationship which may or may not be sexual. The sexually explicit script primarily focuses on sexuality and attraction and emotional intimacy is less important and may not even be present. Sexual contact is initiated with no implied goal of future commitment. There is ambiguity in the scripts which further vary depending upon the age of the individual but friendship and romance scripts appear to be the most preferred (Rose and Zand, 2002)

Successful love relationships are a core ingredient for personal happiness and psychological well-being (Myers, 1993). Lesbians often begin romantic relationships with high hopes that their relationships will be satisfying and long-lasting yet intimate

relationships sometimes end in painful disappointment (Beals, Impett and Peplau, 2002). Lesbian women are often seen as going through a series of relationships of various duration with little time between relationships. They are also seen as beginning relationships soon after meeting someone, possibly due to the emotional intensity characteristic of such relationships. A unique aspect of lesbian dating is the rapid pace of relationship development (Rose and Zand, 2002).

According to Rusbult (1983), an individual's commitment to a relationship is affected by satisfaction, the quality of alternatives to the current relationship and investments made in the relationship. In turn, a woman's degree of commitment influences relationship stability. Beals, Impett and Peplau (2002) present a similar model which maintains that commitment to a relationship is due to positive attraction forces that make partners want to stay together, availability of alternatives and barriers which make it difficult to leave a relationship. Relationship satisfaction provides many rewards such as feeling loved and sharing activities and entails relatively few costs such as conflict or a partner's annoying habits (Duffy and Rusbult, 1986; Kurdek, 1994). Lesbians in couple relationships typically report very positive feelings for their partners and rate their current relationship as highly satisfying and close (Peplau and Spalding, 2000). Lesbian couples tend to be happier when the partners are similar in attitudes and values (Kurdek and Schmitt, 1987) and perceive their relationship as fair and equal in power or decision making (Eldridge and Gilbert, 1990; Kurdek, 1998; Kurdek and Schmitt, 1986; Peplau, Padesky and Hamilton, 1982; Schreurs and Buunk, 1996).

Availability of alternatives includes another potential romantic partner but also includes having more time to devote to friends or activities or even enjoyment of time alone. Research has found that lesbians who perceive more available alternatives are less committed (Duffy and Rusbult, 1986; Kurdek and Schmitt, 1986). Conversely, the lack of available alternatives can be an obstacle to ending a relationship and may explain why some women remain in relatively unhappy relationships (Beals, Impett and Peplau, 2002).

Barriers include anything that increases the psychological, emotional or financial costs of ending a relationship. Barriers include pooling financial resources, sharing a beloved pet, developing a network of mutual friends or time already spent in the relationship. Investments of time, money or other resources that would be lost if a relationship ended are of particular importance (Beals, Impett and Peplau, 2002). Barriers to leaving a relationship are deemed a significant predictor of relationship stability over a five year period (Kurdek, 1998).

Overall, an individual's personal commitment to maintain a relationship is strong when the relationship is highly satisfying, when alternatives are few or unattractive and when partners have invested many resources in the relationship. Commitment influences whether couples stay together or break up (Rusbult, 1983). This is true for hetero as well as homo sexual couples. The difference is that most heterosexual couples navigate in a social environment that typically ranges from benign to positively supportive (Beals, Impett and Peplau, 2002). Lesbian couples develop without institutional support and often without the support and even knowledge of family members and as a result, the health and stability of their relationship may be

tied to the level of dependence partners have on each other (Kurdek and Schmitt, 1987; Kurdek, 1988; Kurdek, 1995). The social context in which lesbian relationships unfold is thus an additional salient factor in relationship commitment and stability.

Relationship quality is a multifaceted dyadic experience that includes deep understanding of one's partner, sharing of ideas and information, sharing of deeply personal thoughts and feelings, receipt and provision of emotional support, personal growth, giving help to one's partner and giving and receiving affection (Sternberg and Grajek, 1984). From a developmental standpoint, the salience of these dimensions is likely to shift as the relationship develops (McWhirter and Mattison, 1984). Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) found that stage of relationship is a robust predictor of relationship quality. The early period of a relationship is characterized by limerance, the intensity and euphoria of romantic love. This is followed by homemaking, finding compatibility, the evanescence of limerance, ambivalence and possible conflict. Couples who remain together beyond that are thought to have worked through the issues involved and as a result, report greater relationship quality.

Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) found that reciprocal dyadic dependency and equality of power were particularly important for the relationship quality of lesbians. Other correlates of relationship satisfaction that have been identified in lesbian relationships include high dyadic attachment and shared decision-making (Kurdek and Schmitt, 1986), equality of power (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983; Peplau, Padesky and Hamilton, 1982), equality of involvement in the relationship and a similarity of attitude and backgrounds (Peplau, Padesky and Hamilton, 1982). Eldridge and Gilbert (1990) found that lesbians are typically in stable, enduring and committed

relationships which are egalitarian in nature and with a high degree of emotional intimacy, defined as a closeness of feelings.

Changes in relationship commitment over time are attributed to changes in the discrepancy between current and ideal levels of attachment, autonomy and equality (Kurdek, 1995). Cochran and Peplau (1985) identified attachment, autonomy and equality as core dimensions of relationship quality. Attachment refers to the value placed on having a close and relatively secure love relationship with one person. Autonomy concerns the boundaries between oneself as an individual and oneself as a partner in a relationship. Equality deals with the extent to which partners share power in and responsibility for the relationship. Conflict and conflict resolution are also seen as key indicators of relationship satisfaction and commitment (Gottman, 1994; Heavey, Layne and Christensen, 1993; Markham, Renick, Floyd and Stanley, 1993; Kurdek, 1994).

Regardless of the level of commitment, lesbians cannot avail themselves of the benefits of marriage which offers not only legal and financial advantages but also the stamp of legitimacy. As a result, lesbians' experiences of social acceptance and support are altogether different from those of heterosexuals (Biaggio, Coan and Adams, 2002). This can take an exacting toll on the relationship. Despite their denied access to the social institution of marriage, many lesbians consider themselves married and would marry legally if permitted. Many have gone to Vermont to marry since that state legalized homosexual marriages in 2001. These couples draw a modicum of societal affirmation for their relationship even though the marriage is not recognized in the other states. Increasingly, lesbians are making a pledge of commitment in a

formal ceremony, often in gay or gay accepting churches, attended by supportive family and friends. All of these actions are efforts by lesbians to publicly declare their commitment as a couple in the only ways possible for them. As a result, they garner social support which has long been recognized as important to validate heterosexual relationships and to help ensure their endurance.

It is often noted that lesbian relationships are more likely than other intimate relationships to be characterized by merger (Burch, 1985; Igartua, 1998; Krestam and Bepko 1980). Merger, also referred to as fusion and enmeshment, has been described as a relational process in which the boundaries between the individual partners are blurred and a premium is placed on togetherness and emotional closeness. Lesbian couples may merge as a means to strengthen their identity in a culture that largely negates their existence and may be an adaptive response to adverse conditions (Ossana, 2002; Biaggio, Coan and Adams, 2002). In any event, the desire for a close emotional connection seems to be the primary mark of lesbian relationships. Attachment, emotional involvement, intimacy and general closeness are highly correlated with satisfaction in lesbian relationships (Burch, 1997).

Anecdotally, lesbian women stated they feel that they were created or born lesbian and that they did not choose to be lesbian. Rather, at ever deepening levels, they realized and accepted that they are lesbians. The only choice was whether to be true to the reality they knew about themselves. This is typically followed by the proclamation that no one would choose to be lesbian given the realities of homophobia and stigmatization to be negotiated daily in every aspect of life. Many further maintain that heterosexuals don't choose their sexual orientation either and that they

too simply realize and accept it in a similar process of deepening levels of awareness. In both instances, sexual orientation is a maturing awareness or understanding of what is innate and therefore right and natural to the individual. Further, to imply that heterosexuality is inborn and that homosexuality is a choice also implies that one is right and the other is wrong and an aberration. That sexual cathaxis is so highly charged and fraught with emotion, may itself be an aberration. Ultimately, relationships are not about sex although they include sex to varying degrees. At their best, relationships are about emotional intimacy and building a productive fulfilling life as a couple regardless of gender configuration.

An interesting dynamic of lesbianism consists of the relationships lesbian women often have with other people, whether male or female, straight or gay. There is a relatively high incidence of lesbian women being involved with a woman while one or the other or both of them are married to a man. This may be due in part to the fluid nature often attributed to female sexuality, the pull of emotional intensity characteristic of lesbian relationships or it may be reflective of the inherent struggle with and suppression of homosexuality in a search for acceptance in the face of societal rejection. Many, particularly older, lesbians assert that they never would have married a man in the first place if it weren't for social pressure and the fear of ostracism. Many marriages are broken when the lesbian woman comes to realize that she can no longer suppress or deny the reality of who she is and that there is no truth for her in making a life with a man.

In somewhat similar respects, lesbian women have particular sensitivity to the potential threat they pose to each other and their relationships. Many lesbian women

in relationships feel threatened by lesbian women who are single and even perhaps to a lesser degree, lesbian women in couples. What begins as friendship between lesbian women can easily become blurred by the very emotional intensity that is characteristic of lesbian relationships. There are some lesbian couples who don't socialize extensively with lesbians who are single as there is frequently an unease about the dynamics and possible repercussions involved. Lesbian women who are single are acutely aware of this unspoken reality and realize they are seen as a potential threat. Even lesbian women in couples are often viewed as threats to a relationship, again due to increased emotional intensity and because there is much potential for other pairings. When two heterosexual couples spend time together, their lines of coupledness are theoretically more apparent with less threat to everyone involved. That is not the case for lesbian couples where the threat is automatically doubled. Both members of the other couple have the potential to move from friendship to pairing with one's partner, just as one can move from friendship to pairing with a partner in the other relationship. These seemingly convoluted waters are navigated successfully but nevertheless with heightened awareness.

Continuing in the relationship vein, lesbian women have a mixture of various relationship configurations with other people. Despite any perceived threat, many lesbians still prefer to be friends with other lesbians, whether single or in couples. Other lesbian women prefer friendships with gay men, while some lesbian women prefer friendships with straight women or even straight men. In actuality, friendships likely result from the particular individuals involved and the friendships they create rather than a conscious, iron-clad preference for friendships involving one gender or

sexual orientation or another. Many lesbian women count as their friends people who are both gay and straight and both male and female. Interestingly, the males whom lesbians befriend are typically gay, yet in contradiction, many lesbians find gay men somewhat or even completely offensive.

Many lesbian women are open with their friends and freely discuss both sexual and relationship issues with them whether male or female or straight or gay. Other lesbian women feel these are private matters that belong in the realm of their primary relationship only. The literature is again sparse in the area of lesbian friendship choices. It is noted that lesbian women create an extended network of friends or a family of choice to provide a sense of validation and acceptance that may not always be available from their family of origin (Beals, Impett and Peplau, 2002). At the same time, lesbian women tend to seek harmonious intergenerational connections with their families of origin (LaSala, 2002). The importance of this is significant to lesbian relationships. Frequent intergenerational contact and supportive relationships with parents are associated with affable marital relations (Burger and Milardo, 1995; Lewis, 1989). Adult children who are emotionally cut off from their parents may be less satisfied and less intimate in their marriage compared with those who have maintained relationships with their parents (Adorney, 1994; Dillard and Pratinisky, 1985).

Parental support for lesbian relationships is all too often not available and thus creates a distance in the relationships between lesbian women and their families which in turn influences lesbians and their unions (LaSala, 2002). Parental disapproval may lessen over time (Beeler and DiProva, 1999; Ben-Ari, 1995; Cramer and Poach, 1988; Muller, 1987) lesbians can facilitate this process (LaSala, 2001). There has been

considerable debate over whether the support of family or friends is more important to lesbian relationship satisfaction (Kurdek, 1988; Kurdek and Schmitt, 1987; Caron and Ulin, 1997; Smith and Brown, 1997). Ideally, mutual support is available among all of these relationships.

## CHAPTER 4

### RELIGION

The leading proscription against homosexuality is religion followed by law which is steeped in religion. Sexual conduct is very much a part of the moral code of a religion. Most of the religious teachings about sex in the Western world are based on the assumption that the purpose of sex is procreation and that the only proper orifice, the vagina, should be used with the proper instrument, the penis. All other forms of sexual activity are deemed evil. To complicate matters, science incorporated many of these beliefs into its own body of knowledge. As a result, both religion and science looked askance at non-procreative sexuality and considered it sinful and pathological. Non-procreative sex included masturbation, homosexuality and the use of contraceptives (Bullough, 2001). Other sexual practices enjoined as unnatural and immoral included foreplay which does not result in coitus and the spilling of seed anywhere other than inside the vagina. Further, both religion and science insisted on marriage as the key to sexual relations, and then only limited sexual relations for the purpose of procreation. Sexual activity even between married couples was highly restricted in form (face to face, man on top, also known as the missionary position) and frequency (no more than once a month until pregnancy occurred and then sexual activity was to cease until six weeks or more following the birth or even weaning of the child or until another child was wanted (Wilcox, 1953).

Breaches in this sexual code posed great threat to the individual. Science maintained that the emission of seed imposed a great drain on the nervous system of the male and because it was potentially damaging, the male was to engage in sex

infrequently and then without any effort to prolong the act. The female's biological make up predisposed in her a desire and need for babies. The female was said to consider sex repugnant and loathsome and only to be endured as minimally and expeditiously as possible for the purpose of conception and continuation of the species and to avoid desertion by her husband who was needed to support and protect the family. Sex was also considered the harbinger of insanity (particularly masturbation), decline and disability and a shortened life (Bullough, 2001). Religion maintained that non-marital, non-procreative sexual activity jeopardized one's soul for eternity.

To further bind all of this together, stringent laws were enacted making any sexual act other than penis-vagina coitus an abominable crime against nature - for heterosexuals as well as homosexuals. However, once sexual activity was relegated to the purview of the law, it was indiscriminately enforced against homosexuals - and then homosexual males rather than females. These laws continue to entail severe punishment for sexual proclivities - sexual activity other than penis-vagina coitus by married couples. These sexual activities include oral and anal sex and even penis-vagina intercourse between unmarried couples. It is the sexual activity that is illegal, regardless of who is performing it - even married, consenting heterosexual adults. Reproduction is seldom the motive for initiating sexual activity and such strictures grossly negate the importance of tenderness, affection and the physical expression of love. In the historically interlinking, overlapping areas of religion, science and law, the learned men of the day made the laws, wrote the books, molded the values and shaped the moral custom. The result of all this has been a rather heart rending

situation where all too many people, overridden with guilt and shame have viewed themselves as sick, sinful and unworthy.

Scientific discoveries and explanations have outmoded many of these beliefs and changed them into sexual myths. As these scientific explanations began to challenge traditional views in the twentieth century, religious beliefs often seemed threatened and were slow to change. As the guardian of traditional values, religion is nevertheless believed by some to be slowly modifying its old attitudes to conform with new findings (Bullough, 2001). Regardless, religious beliefs continue to remain influential in forming the attitudes and behaviors of people regarding their sexual expression (Timmerman, 2001). Virtually all of the world's religions and denominations denounce homosexuality, though more vehemently against males than females. This rather asymmetrical application of the moral code calls into question the true nature and degree of aversion toward homosexuality. This denouncement in turn has caused many homosexuals to denounce their religion, reconcile conflicting beliefs with acquiescence or uncertainty or else succumb to their religions' railing against them. Even for the stalwart, but particularly for the psychologically vulnerable or those with deeply entrenched religious ideologies, successful resolution of denouncement by one's religion, poses a daunting task of herculean proportions. Many simply accede to the teachings of their religion's elders, assuming them to know more of life's answers, rather than seek and trust a different truth which they feel revealed to them. Increasingly, this tide appears to be turning. National polls show that nine out of ten Americans believe in God and consider religion important in their lives. Surveys indicate that nearly eighty percent of Americans believe in the power

of prayer. Studies show that most Americans want spirituality, but perhaps not in religious form. Baby boomers in particular have dropped out of organized religion in large numbers including eighty-four percent of Jews, sixty-nine percent of mainline Protestants, sixty-one percent of conservative Protestants and sixty-seven percent of Catholics. Many left church and synagogue not because they had lost interest in spirituality, but because organized religion was not meeting their spiritual needs. In the past decade, Americans have become more expressively spiritual (Elkins, 1999; Piedmont, 2001).

An understanding in the distinction of terms is helpful. Faith has God alone as its object; religion is a name given to a system of beliefs (code, cult, creed) around which a community is formed. Belief statements are constructed by human beings and are always marked by the particular biases and purposes of particular thinkers, times and places. Precisely because inadequate theology is held with extraordinary certitude, people need to learn not to put their faith in beliefs, but rather to express this faith through beliefs. This requires that belief statements (which may be assumptions carried over from childhood) be examined, discussed and then re-appropriated if compelling or discarded if it becomes clear that they are closing off the connection with God (Timmerman, 2001).

Spirituality can be defined as one's efforts to construe a broad sense of personal meaning within an eschatological context. Because we as humans are intimately aware of our own mortality, we strive to construct some sense of purpose and meaning for the lives we are leading. We question our purpose for existence and the value our lives provide to the world. Answers to these existential questions offer a more

meaningful coherence that gives us the will to live productively. These answers also lead us to develop a sense of spiritual transcendence or the capacity of individuals to stand outside of their immediate sense of time and place and view life from a larger, more objective perspective in which a fundamental unity is seen underlying the diverse strivings of nature (Piedmont, 1999; Piedmont, 2001).

Spirituality comes from the Latin root *spiritus*, which means “breath” and refers to the breath of life. It involves opening our hearts and cultivating our capacity to experience awe, reverence and gratitude. Spirituality is the ability to see the sacred in the ordinary, to feel the poignancy of life and to know the passion of existence and to give ourselves over to that which is greater than ourselves. Spirituality seeks healing and inspiration. The aim of Spirituality is to bring about compassion (Elkins, 1999).

Religion is born of awareness of the transcendent together with expression of that awareness in conceptual, cultural and social form (Ellswood, 1990). Religion is about a shared belief system (dogma) and communal ritual practice (liturgy). Spirituality is about one’s search for meaning and belonging and the core values that influence one’s behavior and the experience of consciously striving to integrate one’s life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives (Schneiders, 1981). All persons are created spiritual beings, as they experience a yearning for self-transcendence and surrender (Benner, 1989). Spirit describes the vital animating force within human beings associated with the mind and feelings as distinguished from the body (Bockting and Cesaretti, 2001).

In many respects, religion is an institutional system of beliefs and practices, is usually conservative in nature and demands adherence to its principles, usually with

stern sanctions for infractions. Spirituality on the other hand emphasizes a personal relationship with God. This relationship is deemed more important than the edicts of any given religion. Some maintain that religion and spirituality are interchangeable terms while others see them as totally distinct. Others maintain that the practice of religion, for most people, is the way they express their hunger for spirituality. At its best, it enhances life. It provides a purpose that makes life worth living, a confidence and self-esteem that come from knowing one is loved unconditionally and an energy to reach out to others (Timmerman, 2001). At its worst, it issues prohibitions that renders behaviors, seemingly inseparable from the people who perform them, as incompatible with religious tenets which in turn undermines the individual's religious convictions and leaves them in a quandary regarding the well being of their soul.

There is a compelling need to live a life that is compatible with one's faith. Rules and practices or prohibitions that may have been appropriate in childhood become quite anachronistic in adulthood. Wisdom inheres in knowing the difference. Critical thinking may be of incalculable value. When we think we have no alternatives in establishing compatibility of behavior with religious prohibitions, we are thinking poorly. To be good theology, a proposition about God, and our relationship to God, must be compatible with the best of science and reality as we know it, compatible with the community's own best tradition and interpretation of reality as it has evolved and have inner coherence in itself which means that it must be logical, consistent in application, create benefit for human life and not create more problems than it solves. To this end, the praxis test affirms that a rule or belief that produces oppression of people is known on its face not to have been revealed by God (Timmerman, 2001).

A significant obstacle to sexual health and spiritual growth results from inadequate or distorted theological notions that masquerade as authentic teaching of faith. Low self-esteem, false guilt and superstition stall true spiritual growth. Religion and spirituality are not the enemies of sexual health and social well-being. Bad theology is an obstacle to spiritual growth. It is high spirituality to be aware of the treasure of a normal day and not pass it by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow. Human beings work out their self-understanding day by day. God's knowledge and love surrounds and supports human beings day by day (Timmerman, 2001). According to philosophical argument, God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived. A major task of spirituality is to fully express one's spirit (Wilber, 2000) and to experience the nearness and presence of God in and to all reality (Timmerman, 2001).

To be stigmatized and considered sinful and an abomination to God according to religious precepts is a contradiction to homosexual males and females who know and trust their relationship with God to be so totally different.

Adolescence is a time of self-discovery in many respects, including the awakening and maturing of the sex drive. For adolescents experiencing a growing awareness of their sexual orientation as homosexual, there is typically added stress and conflict with their religious beliefs. Their struggle for identity and affirmation is exacerbated by what is typically experienced as a hostile, rejecting environment. This is further compounded by their limited world view and internal resources to cope with extensive, unrelenting animosity. Many accept religious teaching that being gay is incongruent with loving and being loved by God. Others settle for the concession that God loves them, the sinner, but hates the sin. Some reject the religion that rejected

them and possibly all others as well or perhaps seek some other expression of faith. Some readily or at least gradually reconcile their belief in God and their sexual orientation as not being in conflict. Most acknowledge experiencing considerable turmoil and pain in the process. At some point, many express the feeling that their pain and confusion was not so much from internal conflict over homosexuality as sin as it was from feelings of rejection and betrayal by their religion and its incongruent teachings regarding God's love. Some speak eloquently of the condemnation of their religion and its hypocrisy regarding love and acceptance of others.

Some feel that relinquishing religion means letting go of something integral to their lives and that pertains to so many other areas of their lives. They see their sense of self, identity and purpose in life as being closely intertwined with their often long held religious beliefs. Many of these women go on to construct new religious realities which take into account their gender and sexual identities (Kirkman, 2001).

Some lesbian women seek membership in churches that emphasize inclusiveness. Some attend Metropolitan Community Church which was established by Troy Perry who proclaimed *The Lord is my Shepherd and He knows I'm gay* (Perry and Lucas, 1972). Still others trade affiliation in traditional religion for pursuit of the spiritual. Many of those who continue in organized religion attend infrequently or remain on the periphery.

Interestingly, the majority of lesbian women profess a faith in God or a Higher Power with whom they often describe themselves as having a close relationship. Similarly these women express a belief in eternal life which they often see as the result of faith alone. Further, many lesbian women feel that it is not a sin to be gay and that

being gay is not in conflict with believing in God. Typically, lesbian women with these beliefs express feeling much loved and blessed by God. The significant area of conflict for many lesbian women is that they often do not feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need and that they do not feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. It must be noted that there is a dearth of information in the literature regarding the subject of lesbianism and religion or spirituality. There have been increasing contributions of recent, but much research is needed to explore the areas of religion and spirituality which are of such relevance to many lesbian women. In addition, this research is needed to help various religions and congregations understand the relevance and congruence of religion and spirituality in the lives of lesbian women. Perhaps rejection in the name of religion is the real aberration and abomination.

## CHAPTER 5

## SEXUALITY

Although growing, there is a paucity of research in the field of human sexual behavior. In particular, the identification of homosexuality describing same gender sexual desire and behavior as a specific category for study is only about one hundred years old. The category of homosexuality includes same gender behavior, self-definition or identification or some combination of these elements. Many maintain that sexual orientation must be understood in a specific time context and that it can and may change over time, meaning that what one does in adolescence may be different in adulthood (Laumann, Gagnan, Michael and Michaels, 1994). The awakening and maturing of sexual awareness begins in adolescence. For heterosexual youths, this complex process is relatively simple. Sexual cathaxis for them is the opposite sex and this is supported by the larger society though with restrictions regarding commencement of sexual activity. For homosexual youths, whose sexual cathaxis is same sex, this process is considerably more problematic. Long standing social prohibitions against homosexuality have already been internalized and compound the process of the homosexual youth coming to terms with sexual orientation and expression. Anecdotally, some youths fairly readily accept this aspect of themselves while others struggle to varying degrees or even resist it altogether.

Historically, females have been taught to suppress their sexuality which was relegated to the confines of marriage. Females who abridged this social norm were dealt dire consequences. Premarital and extramarital sex and giving birth to illegitimate children were met with scorn, rebuke and ostracism. All of these

behaviors were at least deemed within the realm of sexual normalcy. Lesbianism, if conceived of at all, was vehemently considered abnormal with even worse consequences. All of this made it even more difficult in the past for lesbian women to acknowledge and express their sexual orientation. Even today, many lesbian women do not resolve their lesbian sexual orientation until well into adulthood, sometimes even after being married and having children. As a result of all of these factors, lesbianism is even more under researched than the larger field of sexual behavior.

Because of the historical struggle with and denial of sexual orientation and postponement of sexual activity as well as little research, little is known about lesbian sexuality including the commencement of sexual activity among lesbians. For most lesbians, this follows their internal coming out process wherein they explore and resolve their sexual orientation within themselves though this is not always the case. Some females engage in homosexual activity for varying periods of time before acknowledging or even realizing its implications or considering themselves lesbian, much less assuming the label lesbian. It is likely that in the past, the commencement of sexual activity for lesbian women followed considerably behind that of their heterosexual counterparts, all of which lags dramatically behind that of today. Just as sexual activity was purportedly largely postponed in the past, it was also not discussed much which makes clarity of the real situation difficult to establish. The opposite is true today. There appears to be increased acceptance of sexual orientation diversity which better enables today's youth to embrace what they come to see as the truth about themselves in terms of sexual orientation. There is definitely earlier commencement of sexual activity by both hetero and homo sexual youths. And there

is definitely more discussion about sexual behavior than in the past. As a result, one would expect to see today's female adolescents have overall increased savvy and earlier commencement of homosexual activity with more openness about it. This said, there is little in the literature to support or dispute it.

Similarly, there is little in the literature which focuses on the specifics and dimensions of lesbian sexual behavior. Most studies have described lesbian sexual behavior in terms of health or investigations of sexually transmitted diseases (Roberts, Sorensen, Patsdaughter and Grindel, 2000). The rare and primary exception include significant studies by Lyon and Martin (1959), Loulan (1987) and Roberts, Sorensen, Patsdaughter and Grindel, 2000).

Lyon and Martin (1959) mailed a survey to five hundred subscribers of the lesbian publication, *The Ladder*, which was published by the organization Daughters of Bilitis (DOB). Study findings were reprinted by Conrad/Jaffy (2001). This constituted the earliest study of lesbianism. Reflective of the times, only 157 questionnaires were returned and considered useable. In addition to the actual data compiled, the study is particularly valuable in that it studied a very different group of lesbians from that which was previously studied by doctors and criminologists who focused on their respective audience of those who were mentally ill or in prison. The study is also of importance because of its historic value and eventual extension of the relatively meager knowledge base of the field. Highlights of the study's findings include the following:

<u>Age in Years</u>	<u>Number of Persons</u>
Under 20	1
20 – 25	35
26 – 30	34
36 – 40	31
Over 40	<u>25</u>
N =	157

Educational Level:

82%	completed high school
46%	have had four years of college
16%	reported college work beyond the fourth year

\*Census Bureau figures at the time noted:

45%	of white females over 25 for United States as a whole had completed four years of high school
6%	of white females over 25 for the United States as a whole had completed four years of college

Income:

\$ 350.00 median monthly wage  
 \$4,200.00 median annual wage

Occupations:

38%	Professional
33%	Clerical
6%	Students
2.5%	Housewives
10.5%	Sales, managerial, trades, semi-professional

Religious Background as child:

75%	Protestant
22%	Catholic
5%	Jewish

(note: over 100%)

## Religious Background as adult:

50%	Protestant
19%	Catholic
2%	Jewish
6%	Other
23%	None or agnostic

## Homosexual – Heterosexual Scale:

	<u>No. of Persons</u>	<u>%</u>
Exclusively Heterosexual, with no Homosexuality	0	0
Predominantly Heterosexual, only incidentally Homosexual	4	2.5
Predominantly Heterosexual, but more than Incidentally Homosexual	6	4
Equally Heterosexual and Homosexual	4	2.5
Predominantly Homosexual, but more than Incidentally Heterosexual	8	5
Predominantly Homosexual, but incidentally Heterosexual	35	22
Exclusively Homosexual	<u>100</u>	<u>64</u>
	157	100

## Marital Status:

72.6%	Single
6.4%	Married
15.9%	Divorced
3.2%	Separated
1.9%	Widow

## Reasons Given for Marriage:

- “Wished to please parents and family”
- “I would not accept the truth”
- “I didn’t know my own mind”
- “To get away from home”
- “To straighten out”
- “Bored”
- “Convenience”
- “Concealment—hunger for social acceptance”
- “Family satisfaction”
- “To see if I could lead a normal or heterosexual life” (This case rates herself as an exclusive homosexual)
- “To prove to myself as well as to others that I was not homosexual” (This case also rates herself as an exclusive homosexual)

## Friends:

30%	Majority homosexual
50%	Evenly balanced between homosexual and heterosexual
20%	Majority heterosexual

## Knowledge of individual’s homosexuality by co-workers

6%	Most know of their homosexuality
54%	Some know of their homosexuality
40%	Most did not know of their homosexuality

## Acceptance by co-workers knowing of individual’s homosexuality:

90%	Accepted
10%	Did not accept

## Attend Homosexual bars:

51%	Attend homosexual bars
49%	Do not attend homosexual bars

## First Awareness of homosexual tendencies:

4.5 – 44 years	Age Range
11 – 15 years	Mode Age
16 – 17 years	Mean Age

## Age at First Homosexual Experience:

5 – 10 years	7
11 – 15 years	24
16 – 20 years	64
21 – 30 years	49
31 – 40 years	5
Over 40 years	1
None	4
No Answer	<u>3</u>
N =	157

## Relationship Involvement:

72%	Currently engaged in homosexual relationship
28%	Not currently engaged in homosexual relationship

## Length of Present Homosexual Relationship:

<u>Length</u>	<u>Number of Persons</u>
Under 1 year	22
1 – 3 years	40
4 – 6 years	30
7 – 9 years	5
10 years or over	16
No reply	<u>44</u>
N =	157

## Length of Present Homosexual Relationship by Age Bracket:

Age in Years	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	Over 40
Length of Relationship					
Under 1 year	5	7	7	2	1
1 – 3 years	12	9	9	6	4
4 – 6 years	6	7	8	6	3
7 – 9 years	1	0	2	1	1
10 years or over	0	1	0	8	7
No reply	12	7	8	8	9
N=	36	31	34	31	25

Predominant role in Homosexual Relationship:

37.6%	Masculine	(butch)
21.2%	Feminine	(femme)
36.3%	Neither	
5.1%	No Answer	

Adjustment:

64%	Found it not difficult to adjust to their homosexuality
83%	Consider themselves to be well adjusted now

Psychotherapy:

30%	Have received psychotherapy
<75%	Felt no need for psychotherapy
<10%	Felt interest in psychotherapy
>15%	No information

Loulan (1987) collected information on lesbian sexuality throughout the United States and Canada in the 1980's. She gathered the information through a questionnaire she distributed at her workshops and lectures which was answered by 1566 lesbian women. Loulan's findings include the following:

62%	reported they were in a couple with another woman
12%	reported they were casually involved with another woman
26%	reported they were single
68%	of couples reported they had been in their relationship less than 3 years
24%	of couples reported they had been in their relationship four to eight years
7%	of couples reported they had been in their relationship for nine years or more.

Loulon's report of sexual practices is replicated on the following page.

Roberts, Sorensen, Patsdaughter and Grindel (2000) drew upon a large survey by the Boston Lesbian Health Project (BLHP) which consisted of 5,000 questionnaires distributed throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The original study examined seven health related categories which consisted of demographics, personal health practices, health history of self and family, sexual activity, medical history, mental health history, work and environmental information and genetic attributes hypothesized in some earlier studies to be related to homosexuality. The subsequent Roberts et al study focused on participant responses to questions about sexuality, current sexual practices and history of sexually transmitted diseases. Findings of the study include the following:

85%	reported themselves to be lesbian only
3.6%	reported themselves to be bisexual
11.4%	no information
Age 21.6	mean age at which they considered themselves a lesbian
Age 22	mean age at which the respondents first had sex with a woman
90%	felt very happy or pleased most of the time about being a lesbian
7.9	mean number of lifetime sexual partners
5	median number of lifetime sexual partners
71.2%	reported they were currently in a primary relationship with one woman
82.3%	reported they were sexually active in that relationship
1 – 20 years	range of duration of the primary relationship
2.5 years	mean of duration of the primary relationship
90%	reported they do not have sex outside the primary relationship
10%	reported they have sex outside the primary relationship

78%	who reported they have sex outside the primary relationship stated it is with another woman
8%	who reported they have sex outside the primary relationship stated it is with a man
12.8%	who reported they have sex outside the primary relationship stated it is with both another woman and a man
1.2%	no information
96.9%	reported having an orgasm
66.8%	reported they usually or always have an orgasm every time they have sex

The Roberts et al lesbian sexual practices chart is replicated on the following page.

Overall, these studies focus on quantitative, objective aspects of lesbian sexuality such as age when realized sexual orientation, number of partners, type and frequency of sexual practices and length of relationships rather than qualitative, subjective aspects such as feelings toward sex and its place in the relationship, as well as values, regarding compatibility, infidelity and affection.

Studies of any aspect of lesbian sexuality are challenging at best. Studying a stigmatized and often invisible group such as lesbians is difficult because sampling is not possible with a relatively hidden, hard to reach population. The characteristics of the hidden population is not known and makes it difficult to generalize the findings to the entire lesbian population. In addition, the definition of lesbian needs to be consistently clear and multi-dimensional and include both self-identification and behavior. A percentage of women who identify as lesbian have sex with men as well as women and women who identify as heterosexual also have sex with women (Roberts, Sorensen, Patsdaughter and Grindel, 2000). Further, lesbian sexuality is deeply rooted in traditional assumptions about femininity. Women in general are

discouraged from talking about sex. Having sexual contact with someone of the same sex automatically makes one sexually unorthodox. All of this hardly encourages lesbians to talk about sex (Inness, 1999). As a result, it is difficult to glean a modicum of true, accurate understanding of the contemporary lesbian woman which in turn only serves to perpetuate the stereotype that lesbianism, like male homosexuality, is only about sex. Perpetuation of lesbian stereotypes ensures the continued oppression of lesbian women. By participating in research studies, lesbian women facilitate knowledge about and, hopefully, acceptance of themselves.

## CHAPTER 6

### PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to examine certain views, values, practices, circumstances and life experiences of gay women in a small southern town at one point in time and how they compare in each decade of life from teens to the end of the life continuum. The paper does not set about to prove or disprove any given hypothesis. Rather, the paper measures the real life situation of these women's sense of fear, identity, relationships, religion and sexuality. The ultimate goal of the paper is to present a collective profile of gay women in one community who are in their teens, twenties, thirties and beyond. Comparisons can then be made regarding the thinking and experiences of these women with an exploration of how they are impacted by social changes in the larger culture.

#### Methodology

A survey consisting of ninety-eight questions was developed to address five aspects of life concerning gay women. Specifically, the survey was designed to examine the sense of fear, identity, relationships, religion and sexuality of gay women with the purpose of developing a profile of gay women in each decade of life. Questions numbered one through five requested demographical information including age, race, education, employment and income. Questions numbered six through

twenty-three dealt with the respondents' sense of fear of discovery and reprisals for being gay. Questions numbered twenty-four through forty dealt with the respondents' sense of self-identity and comfort level with being gay. Questions numbered forty-one through sixty-six dealt with the respondents' degree of intimacy in various relationships. Questions sixty-seven through eighty-three dealt with the respondents' feelings regarding religion. Questions eighty-four through ninety-eight dealt with the respondents' views and experiences regarding sexuality. The survey instrument itself only stated that it "asks about your views and experiences in several areas" and did not identify the specific areas or describe how the information gathered would be used. The surveys were distributed and returned over a ten week period between October and December 2002. A copy of the survey is attached in Appendix A.

A total of 135 surveys were distributed in the following manner:

Two Local gay bars (25 each)	50
PFLAG (Parents and Friends/Families of Lesbians and Gays)	15
MCC (Metropolitan Community Church)	25
Gay and Lesbian Alliance	25
Word of Mouth	20

N = 135

CHAPTER 7  
DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics -- Community

The study was conducted in a small southern town with the following demographics (U. S. Census 2000):

Population		78,452
Sex	Females	53.5%
	Males	46.5%
Age	15 through 64	58.9%
	15 through 74	69.5%
	Median Age	39.7 years
Race	White	73.5%
	African American	21.3%
	Other	5.2%
Education	Less than 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	20.8%
	High School graduate/GED	30.1%
	Some college, no degree	21.6%
	Associate degree	6.5%
	Bachelor's degree	13.4%
	Graduate/Professional degree	7.4%
Employment	In labor force	52.2%
	Unemployed	4.2%
	Armed Forces	.2%
	Not in labor force	43.4%
	Management, professional and Related occupations	30.8%
	Service occupations	16.9%
	Sales and office occupations	28.6%
	Farming, fishing, forestry	.4%
	Construction	7.6%
	Production, transportation	15.7%

Income	Less than \$10,000	11.9%
	\$10,000 to \$14,999	7.6%
	\$15,000 to \$24,999	16.5%
	\$25,000 to \$34,999	16.3%
	\$35,000 to \$49,999	18.4%
	\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.0%
	\$75,000 to \$99,999	6.4%
	\$100,000 to \$149,999	3.9%
	\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.4%
	\$200,000 or more	1.5%
	Median Income	\$33,119

#### Demographics -- Respondents

A total of forty-eight surveys, 35%, were returned from the 135 distributed.

All together, respondents ranged in age from under twenty to over seventy. A specific breakdown of age is as follows:

Under 20	3	6.3%
21 – 29	7	14.5%
30 – 39	6	12.5%
40 – 49	18	37.5%
50 – 59	11	22.9%
60 and above	3	6.3%
N =	48	100%

The respondents identified themselves racially as follows:

White	41	85.4%
African American	3	6.3%
Hispanic	3	6.3%
Other	1	2.0%
N =	48	100%

The respondents noted their highest educational level as:

GED	3	6.3%
High School Graduate	11	22.9%
Technical School	12	25.0%
College Degree	13	27.1%
Advanced College Degree	2	4.1%
Dropped Out of School	3	6.3%
Comments: Some to two years of College	4	8.3%
N =	48	100%

The respondents described their employment as:

Blue Collar	10	20.8%
Professional	21	43.7%
Business	6	12.5%
No Employment	8	16.6%
Comments: Retired	2	4.1%
Disabled	1	2.0%
N =	48	100%

The respondents ranked their income as follows:

Under \$20,000 per year	17	35.4%
\$20,000 – 40,000 per year	20	41.7%
\$41,000 – 60,000 per year	7	14.6%
\$61,000 – 80,000 per year	4	8.3%
\$81,000 – 100,000 per year	0	0%
Over \$100,000 per year	0	0%
N =	48	100%

Overall, the respondent was typically age forty to forty-nine, of the white race with a college degree or at least some to two years of college, with professional employment and an annual income between \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year.

## CHAPTER 8

This section provides an analysis of each question by two age groups, older and younger, which is reflective of pre and post 1970's socialization.

### QUESTIONS REGARDING FEAR

Question 6: My being gay, keeps me from working with children and teens either in business, volunteer or church work. Sixty-nine percent of the total respondents stated that their being gay does not keep them from working with children and teens either in business, volunteer or church work. This number was the same for the older and the younger age groups. That two thirds of the respondents feel sufficiently comfortable to work with such populations is indicative of minimal fear and withdrawal from activities in this area. Twenty-one percent of all respondents stated no interest in such work making fear an issue in this area for only 4% of all respondents.

Question 7: I care who know I am gay. Thirty-eight percent, over one third, of all respondents stated they care who knows they are gay. This was even higher, 47%, for the older group and 19% for the younger. This is likely due to the older groups' socialization before the 1970's when homosexuality was even more deemed a sickness and a sin causing homosexual people to remain closeted. For many homosexuals, even today's enlightenment seems too good to be true and for many, the darkness and subterfuge of the past is a carry-over to the present. At the same time, it is noted that 60% of all respondents, comprised of 75% of the younger group and 53% of the older

group do not care who knows they are gay. In effect, nearly two thirds of these lesbian women feel sufficient comfort and acceptance to be more open with people in general.

Question 8: I wonder if people would accept me if they knew I am gay. The two age groups evenly stated they wonder and don't wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay. Fifty percent of the younger, older and total wonder and 50% of the younger, 44% of the older and 46% of the total do not wonder if people would accept them. Six percent of the older group stated no comment. It is maintained that, whether expressed or not, even these gay women have thought and formed an opinion about the issue just as the others have. Again, this requires energy and is something heterosexuals are not called upon to do.

Question 9: I am completely or somewhat in or out of the closet. It is particularly noteworthy that 82% of both groups, 75% of the younger and 85% of the older, consider themselves to be somewhat or completely out of the closet. Conversely, 18% of the total respondents consider themselves to be somewhat or completely in the closet. Thirteen percent of the younger group consider themselves both somewhat and completely in the closet. Of particular interest, 9% of the older group consider themselves somewhat in the closet and only 6% consider themselves to be completely in the closet. Regardless of any concern about who knows they are gay or whether they would be accepted, the great majority of gay women in both age groups are out of the closet to varying degrees.

Question 10: I have come out to the important people in my life. Similarly, the great majority of gay women stated they have come out to all (60%) or most (25%) of

the important people in their life and another 10% stated they have come out to some of the important people in their life. Six percent of the older group have come out to none of the important people in their life, again a likely carry-over from the need to remain closeted in the previous era. A full 100% of the younger group has come out to some, most or all of the important people in their life which gives some validity to the view that socialization was different for this group or they are more trusting of their important people or they are more rejecting of anti-homosexuality sentiments.

Question 11: I feel their response was mainly or somewhat acceptance/rejection or no noticeable difference. Coming out to the important people in their life has been a positive experience overall for this group. Forty-eight percent feel that their important people's response was mainly acceptance, 31% feel it was somewhat acceptance and 8% feel there was no noticeable difference. Only one out of ten experienced some degree of rejection. The older group experienced slightly more rejection which, again, is likely a function of their earlier socialization which negatively viewed homosexuals. The elders and peers of the older group were themselves taught to reject homosexuality and that message was effectively internalized by homosexuals who practiced subterfuge to avoid rejection.

Question 12: I am willing to be a mentor for a gay teen. Nearly half of the total respondents stated they are willing to be a mentor for a gay teen and one-third stated they are not sure. While the younger group expressed more uncertainty, 44% compared to the older group, 28%, they also expressed more willingness to be a mentor, 50% compared to 38% for the older group. It is noteworthy that only 6% of the younger group stated they are not willing to be a mentor for a gay teen while 28%

of the older group stated they are not. The younger group may more readily identify with the struggles of gay teens due to their age proximity. It may also be that they feel they have more time and energy and perhaps an increased sense of obligation to assist younger gays deal with the myriad complexities of their sexual orientation. It may also be that they feel more buoyed with hope or even resistance to rejection. At the same time, just as half of the younger group expressed a willingness to be a mentor for a gay teen, half of the group stated no, 6%, or that they were unsure, 44%. Their ambivalence or unwillingness may be due to their involvement in other pursuits or disinterest. It may also be due to some apprehension over their motives being misconstrued by others, particularly heterosexuals.

Question 13: I have been: harassed, the victim of a crime, both, neither because I am gay. Sixty-seven percent of all respondents stated they have not been harassed or the victim of a crime because they are gay. Half of the younger group and three fourths of the older group stated they have not been victimized in either way. Half of the younger group stated they were victimized. Twenty-five percent stated they have been harassed, 6% stated they have been the victim of a crime, and 19% stated they have been both harassed and the victim of a crime because they are gay. These results are likely due to the increased visibility of gay women overall, particularly younger ones who may attempt to hide less, and it may be due to possible increased aggression and violence in society as a whole. It is noted that harassment was the primary form of victimization for both groups which would be the less overtly violent.

Question 14: I feel that most people who know me think I'm gay. Over half of all respondents stated they feel that most people who know them do or probably think

that they are gay. Less than half feel that people who know them think they are gay or are not sure. Again, the numbers were higher for the younger group in terms of them thinking people do or probably think that they are gay and higher for the older group in terms of them thinking people do not know they are gay or they are not sure if people think they are gay. The younger group seems to credit others with increased awareness and possibly increased acceptance of sexual orientation which may make them feel and even be more visible than the elder group. Real and perceived increase acceptance fosters increased openness which further fosters increased acceptance.

Question 15: I am afraid of people knowing I am gay. Over half of all respondents stated they are afraid of people knowing they are gay. Fifteen percent, 12% for the younger and 17% for the older, are afraid of family knowing they are gay. Family approval is highly important to most people and most people do not want to jeopardize or lose it. Some significant degree of fear of rejection is present to cause 15% of these women to withhold their true identity from their family, particularly given the belief by many that family loves, cares and accepts its own when no one else will.

Fourteen percent of the older group and none of the younger group are afraid of friends knowing they are gay. This gives credence to the view that people choose friends where there is comfort and acceptance and also to the view that family of choice is equally if not more important than family of origin. That gay people create a family of friends is nothing new. Further, the identification of others as family, even in brief passing, is a frequent occurrence. Openness and acceptance are compelling needs and the creation of a supportive network is essential. Again, the younger group

is more open with friends. This is reflective of their increased openness overall for all the reasons previously discussed.

Both groups are significantly afraid of co-workers and clients/customers knowing they are gay. The further out the circles of intimacy in relationships, the more afraid gay women become. In part, the individuals in these more remote circles are an unknown quantity plus the stakes are tied to livelihood. Thus there is increased fear of the unknown resulting in increased fear of negative repercussions which impels many gay women to pass as heterosexuals or at least participate in the don't ask/don't tell conspiracy if not outright deny their sexual orientation. Self-preservation is the operational factor.

Question 16: I try to remain invisible because I am gay. The great majority of both groups stated they do not try to remain invisible because they are gay. Ninety-four percent of the younger group tries not much or not at all to remain invisible. This is in keeping with their previously established greater degree of openness overall. Seventy-nine percent of the older group tries not much or not at all to remain invisible. However, roughly one out of five of the older group tries somewhat or as much as possible to remain invisible. Again, this is likely due to their socialization of homosexuality as negative, sickness and sin, coupled with a need to survive by hiding out of fear. It is noted that these figures are consistent with those given in question thirteen regarding victimization in the form of having been harassed or the victim of a crime. Nevertheless, 84% of both groups of respondents do not try much or at all to remain invisible.

Question 17: I would be more involved in my community if I felt more accepted. Both age groups were essentially symmetrical as to whether they would be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted. Just under half of both groups stated they would or would somewhat be more involved. Fifty-six percent of both groups individually and combined stated they would not be more involved.

Question 18: I feel most people do/not accept me and I do/not fear them or have not thought about it. Significantly, neither group stated they feel that most people don't accept them and they fear people. A few of the older group stated they feel most people don't accept them but they do not fear people. Approximately two-thirds of the younger group and three-fourths of the older group feel that most people accept them. That the figure is higher in this instance for the older group may in part be due to the very fact that they are older and seen as less sexual and therefore more benign, resulting in increased acceptance, whether real or perceived. One-third of the younger and one-fifth of the older group stated they have not thought about the matter. This may be due to an increased overall sense of openness and acceptance which for some makes the issue moot.

Question 19: If people knew I'm gay, I fear I might be killed, physically harmed, raped, lose my job, forced to move, be harassed or no fear. At the same time, approximately 6% of both groups feel that if people knew they are gay, they fear they might be killed, 4% fear they might be harmed physically, 6% fear they might be raped, which represents 16% fearing for their physical safety. This is likely due to real, recorded instances of physical violence against homosexuals and the underlying belief that no one is immune to the possibility.

Collectively, the older group has more fear of losing their job and/or having to move from their home. Approximately one-quarter of each group fears being harassed. This comparatively more nebulous form of victimization is more widely experienced by more gay women than the other areas delineated. Nevertheless, half of the younger and one-third of the older groups stated they have no fear. Again, this likely due to an increased sense of openness and acceptance overall.

Question 20: I feel there is support for my relationship from family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, society or no support. Approximately one-third of all respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by family and friends. This figure was higher for family for the older group and still higher for friends for the younger group. Thirteen percent of both groups stated they feel there is support for their relationship by neighbors. This same figure applies to the older group for co-workers compared to 18% for the younger group. Five percent of the older group expressed feeling support for their relationship by society and none of the younger group expressed feeling support by society. Also, 5% of the older group expressed feeling no support for their relationship. None of the younger group expressed feeling no support for their relationship. Again, the further out the circles of intimacy in relationships, the less support was felt by both groups for their relationships by others. This is consistent with both groups feeling increased fear of others in the more remote circles of intimacy as previously discussed.

Question 21: I feel overall that my community accepts/rejects/fears/does not understand me or none of the above. Nearly half of the total respondents and older respondents and fully half of the younger respondents feel that their community

accepts them. At the same time, one-third of the older and one-fifth of the younger respondents feel that their community does not understand them. This difference speaks to some degree of peaceful co-existence on the part of others who are apparently willing to accept homosexuals even though they do not understand them. This presents an important opportunity for homosexual women to positively influence the thinking of others. By overcoming their own fears, and reaching out more to others and revealing their true identity, gay women enable others to better understand them, and ultimately, even better accept them. A certain amount of responsibility for this does indeed rest with gay women. The challenge of course is in determining how and when to go about this—and when not to. That approximately one-half of the total respondents feel that their community accepts them indicates that the time is right for increased self-revelation. However, that approximately half of the total respondents feel that their community accepts them, also means that half don't. Thus, there is a calculated risk with possibly significant repercussions involved. Fear may be the ultimate enemy. The very fear that holds gay women back, may also be what imprisons them. Gay women's fear of others may be more than reality warrants. As more gay women come out more often to people, the true reality will be more crystallized. Hopefully, gay women will feel accepted and understood—as will those around them.

Question 22: I am afraid of what people would do if they knew I'm gay. Two-thirds of all respondents stated they are not much or not at all afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. One out of five of all of the respondents stated they are somewhat or very much afraid of what people would do. Fifteen

percent stated they have not thought about it. Again, more respondents in both age groups express less fear which is in keeping with previous discussion.

## CHAPTER 9

## QUESTIONS REGARDING IDENTITY

Question 23: My partner and I openly share the same bedroom or .... Over half of all respondents stated they and their partner openly share the same bedroom. Nearly two-thirds of the younger group compared to over half of the older group stated they openly share the same bedroom. A small number, 8%, of all respondents stated they and their partner share the same bedroom but make it look like they have separate bedrooms. These numbers indicate more openness and less subterfuge in both age groups. Again, this appears reflective of a perceived increase in openness and acceptance by others as previously discussed. It is also likely due in part to gay women's apparent increased desire to be true to themselves and to acknowledge rather than deny their partner and the relationship they share. This may be influenced somewhat by the believed futility of it, given heightened social awareness of sexual orientation. A small number, solely comprised of the older group, have separate bedrooms but occasionally sleep together. It was noted by respondents that there are medical reasons for this. A small number of respondents do not live together and nearly one-fourth stated they have no partner.

Question 24: I realized I was gay when I was age.... Just over one-half of all respondents stated they realized they were gay when they were under the age of eighteen. This reflects just under half of the older group and nearly two-thirds of the younger group. Over one-fourth of all respondents stated they realized they were gay when they were eighteen to twenty-nine years of age. This figure represents almost one-third of the younger group and just over one-fourth of the older group. Only one

of sixteen respondents in the younger group stated she realized she was gay between the ages of thirty and forty-four while nearly one-fourth of the older group stated they were thirty to forty-four years of age when they realized they were gay. Overall, approximately two-thirds of the younger group realized they were gay when they were under eighteen and one-third realized it when they were eighteen to twenty-nine years of age. It is noted that the younger group is comprised of women through age thirty-nine. Approximately half of the older group realized they were gay when they were under eighteen, just over one-quarter realized it when they were eighteen to twenty-nine and just under one-quarter realized it when they were thirty to forty-four. Three percent realized they were gay when they were over fifty-five years of age. These figures appear consistent with earlier awareness of sexuality and commencement of sexual activity for youths in general in more recent times. These figures are also likely due to prolonged struggle with and denial of homosexual orientation in the past due to more negativity regarding homosexuality which was viewed as sickness and sin. A more accepting climate today appears to decrease the struggle and denial for younger gay women who also may be more resistant to subterfuge.

Question 25: I feel I am living the life I was born to live. Eighty three percent of all respondents, 88% of the younger and 81 % of the older, stated they feel they are living the life they were born to live. Fifteen percent of the total respondents stated no comment. Only 3% of the older and none of the younger respondents stated they do not feel they are living the life they were born to live. These figures imply congruence and harmony or, at minimal, reconciliation regarding sexual orientation and one's place and sense of self in the world.

Question 26: I was considered a tomboy while growing up. Two-thirds of all respondents, 69% of the older and 56% of the younger, stated they were considered a tomboy while growing up.

Question 27: I consider myself butch, femme or neither. Thirty-one percent of all respondents stated they consider themselves butch, 23% stated femme, 42% stated neither and 4% wrote in both. These figures differed somewhat to considerably for each group. Thirty-eight percent of the younger group stated they consider themselves butch compared to 28% of the older group. Thirty-one percent of the younger group stated they consider themselves femme compared to 19% of the older group. Twenty-five percent of the younger group stated they consider themselves neither, compared to double, 50%, of the older group. The older group placed more value on being neither butch nor femme. The younger group placed more value on being butch, 38%, though only slightly more than being femme, 31%, which was only slightly more than being neither, 25%. There is a more even distribution among the younger group, giving some credence to the assertion that there is something of a renaissance or resurgence of butch/femme identities among younger lesbian women. That 38% of the younger group consider themselves butch is possibly reflective of the larger society's greater value of males.

Question 28: I consider my partner butch, femme, neither or no partner. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents stated they consider their partner butch, 27% stated femme, 19% stated neither, 23% stated no partner and 2% wrote in both. Fifty percent of the younger group stated they consider their partner butch compared to 19% of the older group. Thirteen percent of the younger group stated they consider their partner

femme compared to 34% of the older group. Nineteen percent of both groups stated they consider their partner neither. Thirteen percent of the younger group compared to 28% of the older group stated they have no partner. Six percent of the younger group compared to none of the older group wrote in they consider their partner both. One half of the younger group considers their partner butch and one third of the older group considers their partner femme.

Thirty-eight percent of the younger respondents see themselves as butch and 50% see their partner as butch. Thirty-one percent of the younger group see themselves as femme and 13% see their partner as femme. Twenty-five percent of the younger group see themselves as neither and 19% see their partner as neither. Six percent wrote in that they see themselves and their partner as both. The remaining 13% stated no partner. The majority of the younger group see themselves and their partner as butch.

Twenty-eight percent of the older group see themselves as butch and 19% see their partner as butch. Nineteen percent of the older group see themselves as femme and 34% see their partner as femme. Fifty percent of the older group see themselves as neither and 19% see their partner as neither. Three percent wrote in that they see themselves as both but none wrote in that they see their partner as both. The majority of the older group see themselves as neither and their partner as femme.

These figures for both groups give credence to the assertion that more couple configurations exist today including butch/butch and femme/femme and neither as well as the traditional stereotype butch/femme. There are myriad reasons for butch/femme/variation roles as well as why and how gay women assume them as

discussed in the literature review. The identification of self, 54%, and partner, 56%, as butch and/or femme continues for over half of all respondents.

Question 29: I am glad I am gay. Seventy-seven percent of the stated respondents, 81% of the younger and 75% of the older, stated they are glad they are gay. Fifteen percent of the total, 13% of the younger and 16% of the older stated no comment. Only 8% of the total, 6% of the younger and 9% of the older stated they are not glad they are gay. As with question twenty-five, concerning whether the respondent feels they are living the life they were born to live, these figures imply congruence and harmony or, at minimal, reconciliation regarding sexual orientation and one's place and sense of self in the world. Regardless of any fear due to real or perceived obstacles, three out of four of the older and eight out of ten of the younger respondents are glad they are gay. This could be due to familiarity alone or it could be due to gay women valuing and feeling comfortable with themselves and realizing they would not be who they are if they were not gay.

Question 30: I would rather be straight. Similarly, 81% of the total respondents, 94% of the younger and 75% of the older, stated they would not rather be straight. Only 4% of the older and none of the younger stated no comment. Ten percent of the total respondents, 6% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they would rather be straight. Again, this could be due to familiarity or to gay women valuing and feeling comfortable with themselves and not wanting to lose their sense of self or life experiences. For these women, there is acceptance and congruence despite any fear due to real or perceived obstacles.

Question 31: I feel: I was created/chose to be homosexual or not sure. In this same vein, over half, 54% of the total respondents, 56% of the younger and 53% of the older, feel they were created to be homosexual. Nineteen percent of the total, 13% of the younger and 22% of the older, feel they chose to be homosexual. Twenty-seven percent of the total, 31% of the younger and 25% of the older, stated they are not sure. The majority of both groups feel they were created to be homosexual, indicating they did not choose it as many charge. The role of genetics in sexual orientation for all people is an area requiring much study.

Question 32: I feel: guilty, confused, ashamed, all or none of the above. In keeping with the above figures, 80% of the total respondents, 94% of the younger and 78% of the older, stated they do not feel guilty, confused or ashamed because they are gay. It is noteworthy that 9% of the older respondents feel guilty, confused and ashamed because they are gay, essentially one out of ten in this group. This is likely due to the effects of earlier socialization as previously discussed. While 6% of the younger group feel ashamed, none feel guilty, confused or guilty, confused and ashamed. All of these feelings are taught by society in its judgment of sexuality in general and sexual orientation in particular. These feelings are then internalized by the individual. Innate guilt, confusion and shame regarding sexual activity and sexual orientation appears questionable. If that is indeed the case, two out of ten of these gay women are laboring under these socially imposed negative feelings. This may be particularly ironic if genetics do indeed determine sexual orientation.

Question 33: I have gay relatives. Fifty-four percent of all respondents, 55% of the younger and 49% of the older, stated they have gay relatives. An additional 24% of

all respondents, 20% of the younger and 26% of the older, stated they are not sure whether they have gay relatives which indicates they think they might which also speaks to the invisibility of gay people, even with other gay people in their own family which speaks to the effects of homophobia. Twenty-two percent of the total respondents, 25% of the younger and 21% of the older, stated they do not have gay relatives. Again, due to invisibility and homophobia, this number may be slightly lower in reality. In any event, approximately eight out of ten of all respondents stated either they have gay relatives or they are not sure which indicates they think they might. Such high numbers speaks to the role of genetics and the need for more research in this area.

Five percent of the younger group, none in the older group, stated their mother is gay. None in the younger group, 3% of the older group, stated their father is gay. None of the younger group, 8% of the older group stated they have a brother(s) who is gay. Ten percent of the younger group and 8% of the older group stated they have a sister(s) who is gay. Twenty percent of the younger group and 16% of the older group stated they have maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. Twenty percent of the younger group and 8% of the older group stated they have paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. None of the younger group and 3% of the older group stated they have a maternal grandparent who is gay. None of the younger group but 8% of the older group wrote in that they have gay nieces and nephews. It is noted that most of the younger respondents would not have nieces and nephews old enough to be adolescents and show signs of sexual orientation. It is particularly noteworthy that 30% of all respondents stated their gay relatives are female or in the female line which gives

some credence to the author's view that genetics in the female line plays a role in sexual orientation.

Question 34: I suspect I have gay relatives. Nearly 39% of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 37% of the older group stated they suspect they have gay relatives. An additional 32% of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 38% of the older, stated they are not sure which again indicates they might. As stated previously, this speaks to the invisibility of gay people and the effects of homophobia. Twenty-five percent of the total respondents, 44% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they do not suspect they have gay relatives. Again, due to invisibility and homophobia, this number may be slightly lower in reality. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 8% of the older, did not answer the question.

None of the younger and 5% of the older group stated they suspect their mother is gay. None of either group stated they suspect their father is gay. None of the younger and 8% of the older group suspect their brother(s) is gay. Six percent of the younger and 3% of the older group suspect their sister(s) is gay. Nineteen percent of the younger and 11% of the older group suspect they have maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relative(s). Thirteen percent of the younger and 5% of the older group suspect they have paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relative(s). None of the younger and 5% of the older group suspect their maternal grandmother is gay. Neither group stated they suspect they have a paternal grandparent who is gay. Again, it is noteworthy that 25% of all respondents stated they suspect they have gay relatives who are female or in the female line. This figure coupled with 30% of all respondents stating they have gay relatives who are female or in the female line, make this an important area for further

study. It is also noteworthy that 54% of all respondents stated they have gay relatives and 39% stated they suspect they have gay relatives. Even though likely overlapping, these figures speak to the possible genetic role in sexual orientation. As stated previously, they also speak to invisibility and homophobia, even among gay or possibly gay relatives.

Question 35: I: watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines, go to gay bars, gay resorts and campgrounds, or all, some or none of the above. The vast majority of the respondents stated they participate in various gay-related activities such as watching gay movies, reading gay books and magazines, going to gay bars and /or gay resorts and campgrounds. All of the younger and 93% of the older respondents, 96% of total respondents, stated they participate in some or all of these activities. Twenty-two percent of all respondents, 27% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they participate in all of these activities. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 23% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they go to gay bars. Seventeen percent of the total, 23% of the younger and 14% of the older, stated they watch gay movies. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 12% of the younger and 14% of the older, stated they read gay books and magazines. Six percent of all respondents, 8% of the younger and 5% of the older, stated they go to gay resorts and campgrounds. The need for a lesbian community and the opportunity to identify with and participate with other lesbians in the community is thus important if not vital for these respondents. This is in keeping with the literature review which notes the importance of the lesbian community in establishing a strong identity and a vehicle for acceptance as well as a social opportunity for lesbian women.

Question 36: I have considered/attempted suicide in my life because I felt ashamed, rejected, fear of rejection, upset over the break up of a gay or straight relationship or have not attempted suicide. Forty-two percent of all respondents, 45% of the younger and 39% of the older, stated they have considered/attempted suicide in their life. Two percent of the total, none of the younger group and 3% of the older group, did not answer the question. The highest reason given was that the respondent was upset over the breakup of a gay relationship—19% of the total, 20% of the younger group and 18% of the older group. Six percent of all respondents, 10% of the younger group and 3% of the older group, stated they have considered/attempted suicide because they felt rejected by their religion. The same number, 6% of all respondents, 10% of the younger group and 3% of the older group, stated they have considered/attempted suicide because they felt rejected by their family and/or friends. Six percent of all respondents, 5% of the younger group and 6% of the older group, stated they have considered/attempted suicide because they felt fear of rejection by their family and/or friends. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger group and 3% of the older group, stated they have considered/attempted suicide because they felt upset over the breakup of a straight relationship. Only two percent of all respondents, none of the younger group and 3% of the older, stated they have attempted/considered suicide because they felt ashamed they are gay. All of the reasons given for having considered/attempted suicide relate to internal reactions to external events rather than shame over being gay which is arguably an internal reaction to the external event of homophobia.

Question 37: I have been to counseling. Over half of all respondents stated they have been to some form of counseling. Forty-four percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger group and 43% of the older group, stated they have been to individual counseling. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 11% of the younger group and 14% of the older group, stated they have been to couple counseling with same sex partner. Five percent of respondents, 5% of the younger group and 5% of the older group, stated they have been marriage counseling with husband. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older group, stated they have been to all of the above. One third of the respondents, 36% of the total, 39% of the younger group and 35% of the older group, stated they have not been to any form of counseling. The survey did not measure the reasons respondents went to counseling so it is not known to what degree, if any, their being gay played a part in their getting counseling, particularly for those seeking individual counseling or marriage counseling with husband. It is also not known whether any individual counseling was for personal growth or other issues. It is noted that some respondents stated they have been to one or more forms of counseling but not all.

Question 38: My counselor was gay/straight female/male, not sure or no counseling. Thirteen percent of all respondents who stated they have been to counseling, none of the younger and 17% of the older, stated their counselor was a gay female and none stated their counselor was a gay male. Thirty-three percent of all respondents who stated they have been to counseling, 29% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated their counselor was a straight female and 6% of all three groups stated their counselor was a straight male. Seventeen percent of the total, 24% of the

younger and 11% of the older, stated they weren't sure. Forty-two percent of the total, 41% of the younger and 36% of the older, stated they have not been to any form of counseling or did not answer the question. It is noted that some respondents answered twice. The majority of those who have been to counseling went to a female counselor and a good number went to a gay female counselor. Further research is needed to determine if gay women prefer a gay female counselor but see a straight female counselor or even a male counselor if no gay female counselor is deemed available.

Question 39: I feel counseling was very/somewhat/not helpful or no counseling. Similarly, over half of all respondents who stated they have been to counseling, feel that counseling was very or somewhat helpful. Twenty-one percent of these respondents, 13% of the younger and 25% of the older, feel that counseling was very helpful. Thirty-one percent of these respondents, 25% of the younger and 34% of the older, feel that counseling was somewhat helpful. Six percent of these respondents, 19% of the younger and none of the older feel that counseling was not helpful. Again, 42% of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated they have not been to counseling. Further research is needed to determine what role having a gay female counselor might play in this matter.

Question 40: I feel I am in good physical/emotional/mental health, all or none of the above. The vast majority of respondents stated they feel they are in good physical, emotional and/or mental health. Only 5% of all respondents, 6% of the younger group and 4% of the older group, stated they feel they are not in good physical, emotional or mental health. One percent of all respondents, none of the younger group and 1% of the older group, did not answer the question. Fifty percent of all respondents

answered more than one. These figures would appear to refute the image of many people that gay women are mentally or emotionally ill. The counter challenge of course would be that people who are mentally or emotionally ill often don't know it.

## CHAPTER 10

## QUESTIONS REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS

Question 41: As a child, I experienced abuse or violence. Three-fourths of all respondents stated they experienced some form of abuse or violence as a child. Sixteen percent of all respondents, 14% of the younger group and 17% of the older group, stated they experienced physical abuse. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger group and 20% of the older group, stated they experienced emotional abuse. Sixteen percent of the total, 19% of the younger and 15% of the older, stated they experienced sexual abuse. Four percent of the total, none of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they experienced incest. Nine percent of the total, 10% of the younger and 9% of the older experienced rape. Ten percent of the total, 14% of the younger and 9% of the older, experienced domestic violence. Twenty-four percent of the total, younger and older groups stated they did not experience any of these forms of violence. That the incidence and degree of aggression in the violence is so high, is noteworthy and might lead some to look for causality of lesbianism in such childhood experiences. At the same time, that 94% of these gay women feel that they are in good physical, emotional and/or mental health, as described in question forty above, may speak to the resiliency in gay women. A comparison of these figures with those of heterosexual women who experienced similar abuse in childhood would also be helpful. One area of investigation may be to turn the focus from childhood abuse causing lesbianism to whether there is something in the lesbian as a child that elicits such abuse compared to heterosexual women.

Question 42: As an adult, I have experienced abuse or violence with a same-sex partner. Less than half of these respondents overall, 46% of the total, 55% of the younger group and 41% of the older group, stated that as an adult, they have not experienced abuse or violence with a same sex partner. Sixteen percent of all respondents, 14% of the younger and 18% of the older, stated they have experienced physical abuse. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 14% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they have experienced emotional abuse. Five percent of all respondents, 9% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they have experienced sexual abuse. None of the respondents stated they have experienced incest or rape. Eight percent of all respondents, 9% of the younger and 8% of the older, stated they have experienced domestic violence. The highest incident of violence was emotional abuse followed by physical abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse. That half of these lesbian women have experienced some form of violence as an adult with a same sex partner is surprising and an area for further research. It is noted that physical and emotional abuse was the most frequent form of abuse in same sex relationships in the younger group and emotional abuse was the most frequent type of violence in the older group. Also, there was more physical abuse in the older group than in the younger group.

Question 43: As an adult, I have experienced abuse or violence with an opposite sex partner. Forty-two percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated they have not experienced abuse or violence with an opposite sex partner. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 8% of the younger and 15% of the older, stated they have experienced physical abuse. Twenty percent of all respondents, 12% of the

younger and 24% of the older, stated they have experienced emotional abuse. Ten percent of all respondents, 16% of the younger and 7% of the older, stated they have experienced sexual abuse. None of the respondents stated they have experienced incest. Four percent of the total, 8% of the younger and 2% of the older, stated they have experienced rape. Eleven percent of all respondents, 12% of the younger and 11% of the older, stated they have experienced domestic violence. The highest incident of violence was emotional abuse 20% followed by physical abuse 13%, domestic violence 11%, sexual abuse 10% and rape 4%. This same order is followed by the lesbian women experiencing violence with a same sex partner, excluding rape and with similar figures overall: emotional abuse 25%, physical abuse 16%, domestic violence 8%, sexual abuse 5% and rape 0%. That there was slightly higher emotional abuse in the same sex relationships may be reflective of what is shown in the literature to be the more highly intensive emotional nature of lesbian relationships. That there was slightly higher physical abuse in the same sex relationships and similar figures for domestic violence is surprising and requires further research. It is also noted that sexual abuse was the most frequent type of violence in opposite sex relationships in the younger group and emotional abuse was the most frequent type of violence in the older group. Additionally 8% of the younger group experienced rape in opposite sex relationships compared to the older group at 2%. Overall, slightly more of the younger group, 44%, has experienced abuse or violence than the older group at 41%.

Question 44: As an adult, I have experienced abuse, violence or crime by someone who was not a partner. Nearly two-third of all respondents, 20% of the younger and 52% of the older, stated that as an adult, they have experienced some form of abuse,

violence or crime by someone who was not a partner. The most frequent form was crime against their property as stated by 24% of all respondents, 20% of the younger and 27% of the older. Seventeen percent of all respondents, 12% of the younger and 21% of the older, stated they have experienced emotional abuse. Sixteen percent of all respondents, 20% of the younger and 12% of the older, stated they have experienced crime against their person. It is not known in this instance whether the emotional abuse and crimes against their person and/or property was due to harassment or discrimination over sexual orientation. That 17% of all respondents stated they have experienced emotional abuse by someone who was not a partner seems high and some may be the result of sexual orientation. At the same time, some may be due to problematic relationships at work, with other relatives or with neighbors.

Question 45: Counting the one I am currently in, I have had: number of relationships. Ten percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated that counting the one they are in, they have had one relationship. Thirty-one percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 35% of the older, stated they have had two to three relationships. Forty-six percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 48% of the older, stated they have had four to six relationships. Four percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they have had seven to ten relationships. Eight percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 10% of the older, stated they have had over ten relationships. The category of four to six relationships had the most responses for both groups, 44% of the younger, 48% and 46% of all respondents. Interestingly, both groups have some similarities. Eighty-seven percent of all respondents 88% of the younger and 89% of the older,

have had one to six relationships. Twelve percent of all respondents, 12% of the younger and 10% of the older, have had over seven relationships.

Question 46: I have been in my current relationship: length of time. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they have been in their current relationship under one year. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they have been in their current relationship one to five years. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they have been in their current relationship six to ten years. Eight percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they have been in their current relationship eleven to twenty years. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they have been in their current relationship over twenty years. None of the respondents stated they have been in their current relationship over thirty years. Ten percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they are not in a relationship. Half of the respondents have been in their current relationship for five years or less, which makes these relationships young. This is consistent with the findings in the above question in which 87% of all respondents, 88% of the younger and 89% of the older, stated they have had one to six relationships. An important issue is how the respondents define relationship and how serious they consider the relationships to be. Further study is needed in the area of the definition and significance of lesbian relationships and what makes them endure.

Question 47: My relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual, affectionate or roommates. Twenty percent of all respondents, 23% of the younger

and 18% of the older, stated their relationship is primarily sexual. Twenty-seven percent of all respondents, 23% of the younger and 30% of the older, stated their relationship is primarily emotional. Six percent of all respondents, 10% of the younger and 4% of the older, stated their relationship is primarily financial. Twelve percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 11% of the older, stated their relationship is primarily spiritual. Twenty-eight percent of all respondents, 28% of the younger and 29% of the older, stated their relationship to be primarily affectionate. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 4% of the older, stated their relationship to be primarily roommates. Four percent of all respondents, 3% of the younger and 5% of the older, stated they have no current relationship. It is noted that many respondents checked more than one option. Fifty-five percent of all respondents, 51% of the younger and 59% of the older, stated their relationship is primarily emotional and/or affectionate which again speaks to the higher emotional intensity of lesbian relationships as described in the literature. Also of interest is that 30% of all respondents, 23% of the younger and 18% of the older, stated their relationship is primarily sexual. That these figures are similar for the two age groups disputes the notion of lesbian bed death in older lesbians or lesbians in older relationships as described in the literature. It is also noteworthy that 12% of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 11% of the older, describe their relationship as primarily spiritual. This dimension in their relationship as perceived by lesbian women goes against the view, for these women at least, that lesbian relationships are an aberration and abomination.

Question 48: I am committed to my partner. Nearly two-thirds of the younger, older and all respondents stated they are committed to their partner. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated they have no partner. Six percent of all respondents, one of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they are not committed to their partner and 13% of all respondents stated no comment. Regardless of the number of total relationships or the length of current relationship, the majority of these women stated they are committed to their partner.

Question 49: The soonest I have begun living with someone after meeting them is one week, one month, six months, one year or over one year. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is one week. Thirty-three percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 34% of the older, stated one month. Thirty-one percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated six months. Six percent of the younger, older and all respondents stated one year. Ten percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated over one year. Four percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they are not living with someone or did not answer the question. Almost half, 48%, of all respondents stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is one month or less and 79% stated six months or less. Again, this speaks to the emotional intensity of lesbian relationships as described in the literature. It is also consistent with the view of lesbians focused on finding a partner rather than merely dating as described in the literature.

Question 50: I consider myself married. Over one-half, 58%, of all respondents, 56% of the younger and 59% of the older, stated they consider themselves married. Over one-third, 35%, of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they do not consider themselves married. Six percent of all respondents, none the younger and 9% of the older, stated no comment. More of the older respondents stated they consider themselves married and more of this group also stated no comment. It is noted that just as over half of all respondents stated they consider themselves married, nearly half stated they don't or no comment. These responses are both consistent and inconsistent with question forty-eight. Sixty-three percent of all respondents stated they are committed to their partner and 58% of all respondents stated they consider themselves married. Six percent of all respondents stated they are not committed to their partner and 35% of all respondents stated they do not consider themselves married. Thus there is some discrepancy in that some lesbians apparently consider themselves committed to their partner but not married. This may be explained by some respondents using the standard of legal marriage and it may be explained by some respondents seeing these as different feelings within themselves and thus feeling committed to their partner, for whatever reasons, but not feeling married to their partner. Further research regarding these terms and their meaning and value to lesbian women is needed.

Question 51: I have made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony. The great majority of these women have not made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony to a current or former partner. Seventy-one percent of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 69% of the older, stated they have not made such a pledge.

Twenty-one percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they have made such a pledge. Eight percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 13% of the older, stated no comment. Thus while these ceremonies were designed to give gay couples a way to publicly declare their relationship, nearly three quarters of these women, for whatever reasons, have not utilized it. Perhaps they do not consider their feelings or relationship strong enough or perhaps they feel such a ceremony falls short of marriage and is not good enough or perhaps they consider ritual not necessary.

Question 52: I would marry if I could legally. Seventy-one percent of all respondents, 88% of the younger and 63% of the older, stated they would marry if they could legally. Twenty-one percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 25% of the older, stated they would not marry if they could legally. Eight percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 13% of the older, stated no comment. The figures are particularly high for the younger group. Combining questions forty-eight, forty-nine, fifty-one and fifty-two, 63% of all respondents stated they are committed to their partner, 58% stated they consider themselves married, 21% stated they have made a pledge of commitment and 71% stated they would marry if they could legally. Sixty-three percent of the younger and older stated they are committed to their partners. Fifty-six percent of the younger and 59% of the older stated they consider themselves married. Twenty-five percent of the younger and 19% of the older stated they have made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony indicating this relatively new ritual may have more value to younger lesbians or be seen as not necessary by older lesbians who have lived their lives and relationships thus far

without it. Eighty-eight percent of the younger and 63% of the older respondents stated they would marry if they could legally. Again, this option may have more value to younger lesbian women who may see it as more of a, albeit remote, possibility than older lesbian women who are likely more accustomed to and therefore convinced that it is not an option. As with the pledge of commitment, some lesbian women may not see marriage, even if possible, as necessary for whatever reasons. Feminist lesbians in particular may object to the implication of partner as property as viewed in earlier heterosexual marriage. Whatever the controversy of marriage for these women, the majority, even the vast majority of the younger group, stated they would marry if they could legally. It should be noted that it remains unclear whether these women are referring to marriage with their current partner or the ideal of marriage with the right partner.

Question 53: The longest relationship I have ever had is under one year to over thirty years. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated that the longest relationship they have had is under one year. Thirty-three percent of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated one to five years. Nineteen percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 28% of the older, stated six to ten years. Seventeen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 22% of the older stated eleven to fifteen years. Eight percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 13% of the older, stated sixteen to twenty years. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated over twenty years. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated over thirty years. Ninety-four percent of the younger respondents stated they longest relationship

they have ever had is five years or less. This group consists of women through age thirty-nine. These figures are consistent with data from question forty-five regarding number of relationships and question forty-six regarding length of current relationship. Eighty-eight percent of this group has had one to six relationships and 69% have been in their current relationship five years or less. For 19% of this group, the trend is toward longer term relationships with current relationships being six to ten years. The younger lesbian women simply have not lived long enough to have very long term relationships, particularly if they started having relationships later and/or if they have had very many relationships.

Fifty percent of the older group stated the longest relationship they have ever had is six to fifteen years. An additional 13% stated sixteen to twenty years, 9% stated over twenty years and 3% stated over thirty years. Twenty-five percent stated five years or less. This group consists of women age forty and over. These figures are somewhat consistent with data from question forty-five regarding number of relationships and question forty-six regarding length of current relationship. Eighty-nine percent of this group has had one to six relationships and 47% have been in their current relationship five years or less. An additional 28% have been in their current relationship six to ten years, 9% stated eleven to twenty years and 3% stated over twenty years. For nearly half of this group, the trend is toward longer term relationships as the lesbian woman gets older with current relationship being six to ten years or eleven to thirty years. Even if starting relationships later and/or having very many relationships, the older lesbian woman tends at some point for whatever reason, to settle in to a long term relationship. These patterns may resemble heterosexual relationships in large part.

More research is needed to study this as well as the myriad other aspects of lesbian relationships.

Question 54: I have been involved with a woman while she was married to a man. Fifty percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 53% of the older, stated they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man. Forty-eight percent of respondents, 56% of the younger and 44% of the older, stated they have not been involved with a woman who was married to a man. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated no comment. It is noteworthy that essentially half of all respondents stated they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man. Some would argue that this could be attributed to seduction on the part of lesbian women. It could also be due to the emotional intensity of such relationships as previously discussed. It could also be that some married women simply respond to lesbian women because their emotional needs are not being met within their marriage. Others may realize their true lesbian identity after marriage to men. In addition, some lesbian women marry for various reasons and have relationships with other women as part of their true identity. The complexities of the situation are extensive.

Question 55: I have been involved with a woman while I was married to a man. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they have been involved with a woman while they themselves were married to a man. Seventy-five percent of all respondents, 88% of the younger and 69% of the older, stated they have not been married to a woman while they themselves were married to a man. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the

older, stated no comment. Again, one-fourth of all respondents stated they have been involved with a woman while married to a man. As in the above scenario, there are a myriad of possible reasons for this, many of which are the same as above. If these figures were extrapolated to the larger population, many heterosexual marriages have some lesbian involvement, whatever the reasons may be.

Question 56: The longest I have gone between relationships is one month to over ten years. Nearly half of all respondents, 45% of the total, 63% of the younger and 35% of the older, stated the longest they have gone between relationships is twelve months or less. Forty percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated the longest they have gone between relationships is one to five years. Ten percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 16% of the older, stated the longest they have gone between relationships is six to ten years. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, stated the longest they have gone between relationships is over ten years. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, did not answer the question. None of the younger respondents stated they have gone over five years between relationships while 14% of the older stated they have. This may indicate more of a compelling need for whatever reasons many younger lesbian women to pair up. Similarly, this may be somewhat diminished in some of the older women who may have become more selective in finding a partner, taken more time to heal from the previous relationship or simply enjoyed and even preferred some time alone. More research is needed in this area and to determine how these patterns parallel or differ from heterosexual relationships.

Question 57: When my relationships have broken up, I initiated the breakup or my partner did. Nearly half of all respondents, 42%, 47% of the younger and 39% of the older, stated that when their relationships have broken up, they usually initiated the breakup. Thirty-six percent of all respondents, 39% of the younger and 29% of the older stated their partner usually initiated the breakup. Eighteen percent of the younger, older and all respondents, stated no comment. Four percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they have never had a relationship breakup. None of the respondents stated they have never had a relationship. It is noted that for whatever reasons, two respondents answered twice, perhaps indicating the breakup was mutual or possibly conveyed as mutual due to pride. It is noteworthy that 18% of the younger, older and all respondents stated no comment which again could be for many reasons, including pride and privacy. It is noteworthy that a small percentage, 4% of the all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they have never had a relationship breakup. Again, it would be interesting to compare these figures with heterosexual relationships and to further examine what makes both heterosexual and homosexual relationships endure. In such further studies, it should be mindful that at face value, homosexual relationships face more negativity and less support than heterosexual relationships as discussed in the review of the literature. An important question is what makes such relationships endure against all odds.

Question 58: When in a relationship, I feel threatened or accepted by single gay women or couples. One percent of all respondents, 4% of the younger and none of the older, stated that when in a relationship, they feel threatened by single gay

women and by gay women in couples. Thirty-six percent of all respondents, 33% of the younger and 37% of the older, stated they feel accepted by single gay women. Fifty-five percent of all respondents, 50% of the younger and 56% of the older, stated they feel accepted by gay women in couples. Seven percent of all respondents, 8% of the younger and 6% of the older, did not answer the question. Ninety-one percent of all respondents, 83% of the younger and 94% of the older, stated they feel accepted rather than threatened by both single gay women and gay women in couples. It is noted that some respondents answered more than once. These figures differ from some of the anecdotal information and also speaks to the need for lesbian community and support network as previously discussed.

Question 59: When single, I feel threatened or accepted by gay women in couples. Two percent of all respondents, 5% of the younger and none of the older, stated that when single, they feel threatened by gay women in couples. Twenty-two percent of all respondents, 21% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated that when single, they feel gay women in couples see them as a threat. Sixty-nine of all respondents, 68% of the younger and 70% of the older, stated that when single, they feel accepted by gay women in couples. It is noted that this question offered two options which were essentially the same, making it something of a poor question. Nevertheless, the respondents were consistent. Twenty-seven percent of all respondents, 26% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated that when single, they feel accepted by gay women in couples. Forty-two percent of all respondents, 42% of the younger and 42% of the older, stated that when single, they feel gay women in couples accept them. Seven percent of all respondents, 5% of the younger and 8% of

the older did not answer the question. These numbers are comparable to the number of no answers to the question above. The majority of these gay women thus feel accepted rather than threatened by both single gay women and gay women in couples whether they themselves are single or in a couple. It is noted that some respondents answered more than once. Again, these figures differ from some of the anecdotal information and also speaks to the need for lesbian community and support network as previously discussed. At the same time, this appears to be genuine feelings rather than merely to meet a need for lesbian community and support.

Question 60: My partner and I play and/or divide chores based on male-female roles. Four percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they and their partner play male-female roles. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they and their partner divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 25% of the other, stated they and their partner both play male-female roles and divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. Thus a total of 27% of all respondents, 12% of the younger and 34% of the older, participate in one or both of these roles. Fifty-four percent of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 44% of the older, stated they neither play male – female roles nor divide household chores based on traditional male – female roles. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated no partner. This question can be compared to question twenty-seven and twenty-eight regarding butch/femme/both/neither for self and partner as previously discussed. Fifty-four percent of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 46% of the older, consider

themselves butch or femme. An additional 4% of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, consider themselves both. Fifty-six percent of all respondents, 63% of the younger and 53% of the older, consider their partner butch or femme. An additional 2% of all respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, stated they consider their partner both. These figures would indicate that butch/femme is part identity and part role and they are in tandem.

Question 61: I feel satisfied with my relationship. Sixty percent of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 56% of the older, stated they are very satisfied with their relationship. Nineteen percent of the younger, older and all respondents stated they are somewhat satisfied with their relationship. None of the respondents stated they are not very satisfied with their relationship. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they are very unsatisfied with their relationship. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated no relationship. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents are very satisfied with their relationship and one-fifth are somewhat satisfied. A total of 79% of all respondents, 88% of the younger and 75% of the older, are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their relationship. Again, 19% of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated no relationship. Thus satisfaction level is high for these women with none stating they are not very satisfied and only 2% of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older stating they are very unsatisfied with their relationship. These numbers are somewhat consistent with those in question forty-eight, fifty and fifty-two in which over half to nearly three-quarters of all respondents stated they are committed to their partner, 63%, consider themselves

married, 58%, and would marry if they could legally, 71%, even though the latter does not reflect whether the respondent is referring to marriage with their current partner or the ideal of marriage with the right partner.

Question 62: I mainly have friends who are gay/straight, male/female. Nine percent of all respondents, 16% of the younger and 5% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are gay female. Nine percent of all respondents, 11% of the younger and 8% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are straight female. Eighteen percent of all respondents, 59% of the younger and 24% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight female. Thus 36% of all respondents, 32% of the younger and 37% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are gay and straight female. Seven percent of all respondents, 16% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are gay male. Seven percent of all respondents, 11% of the younger and 5% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are straight male. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 5% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight males. Thus 18% of all respondents, 27% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are gay and straight male. Forty-five percent of all respondents, 42% of the younger and 46% of the older, stated they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight, males and females. Two percent, none of the younger and 3% of the older, did not answer the question. Overall, 36% of total respondents stated they have friends who are mainly female, 18% male and 45% both male and female, whether straight or gay. It is noted that several respondents gave more than one answer.

Question 63: The males I am friends with are mainly gay or straight, singles or couples. Twenty percent younger, older and all respondents stated that the males they are friends with are mainly gay singles. Sixteen percent of all respondents, 15% of the younger and 17% of the older, stated the males they are friends with are mainly in gay couples. Nine percent of all respondents, 15% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated the males they are friends with are mainly straight singles. Eleven percent of all respondents, 5% of the younger and 14% of the older, stated the males they are friends with are mainly straight men in heterosexual couples. Forty percent of all respondents, 45% of the younger and 37% of the older, stated the males they are friends with are both gay and straight who are single and in couples. Thirty-six percent of all respondents, 35% of the younger and 37% of the older, stated the males they are friends with are mainly gay whether single or in couples. Twenty percent of the younger, older and all respondents stated the males they are friends with are mainly straight whether single or in couples. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, did not answer the question. The majority of these gay women show a preference for those friends who are male to also be gay, with 36% gay and 20% straight. Even with 40% of all respondents stating the males they are friends with are both gay and straight and both single and in couples, the tendency for this preference would likely remain. It is noted that, as in the previous question, a number of respondents gave more than one answer.

Question 64: I feel gay men are offensive, somewhat/not offensive. Thirteen percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they feel gay men are offensive. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger

and 31% of the older stated they feel gay men are somewhat offensive. Fifty-six percent of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 47% of the older stated they feel gay men are not offensive. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older did not answer the question. It is noteworthy that 50% of the older respondents feel that gay men are offensive or somewhat offensive while 75% of the younger respondents feel gay men are not offensive. This is likely due to stereotypes of gay men and how they differ based on socialization. The stereotypical effeminate gay man does appear offensive to older gay women in particular. This is possibly a carry over from the past when such was the prevailing, unchallenged image of gay men. This image is refuted and undermined daily by younger gay men who have come out of the closet and largely present the same range of demeanor as heterosexual males. As a result, younger gay women befriending younger gay men are not confronted with the same stereotype and its potential negative, offensive connotation and do not feel called upon to offset or overcome it.

Question 65: I discuss sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay and/or straight friends. Eighteen percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 17% of the older, stated they discuss sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay single friends. Eleven percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated gay couple friends resulting in 29% of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 23% of the older, stating they discuss these matters with gay friends whether single or in couples. Seven percent of all respondents, 14% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they discuss these matters with straight single friends. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated

straight couple friends, resulting in 9% of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older stating they discuss these matters with straight friends whether single or in couples. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 33% of the younger and 26% of the older, stated they discuss these matters with both gay and straight friends who are single and in couples. Thirty-four percent of all respondents, 14% of the younger and 46% of the older, stated they discuss these matters with neither. Thus, 29% of all respondents stated they discuss these matters with gay friends, 9% stated straight friends, 29% stated both, all whether the friends are single or in couples, and 34% stated neither. Again, these women show a preference, when discussing these matters, for discussing them with friends who are gay. At the same time, 34%, nearly one-third, stated they do not discuss these matters with friends whether straight or gay and whether single or in couples. It is noted that several respondents gave more than one answer.

Question 66: I discuss relationship issues with gay and/or straight friends. Seventeen percent of the younger, older and all respondents, stated they discuss relationship issues with gay single friends. Seventeen percent of all respondents, 22% of the younger and 14% of the older, stated they discuss relationship issues with gay couple friends resulting in 34% of all respondents, 39% of the younger and 31% of the older, stating they discuss these issues with gay friends, whether single or in couples. Seven percent of all respondents, 11% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they discuss relationship issues with straight single friends. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they discuss relationship issues with straight couple friends resulting in 9% of all respondents, 11% of the

younger and 9% of the older stating they discuss these issues with straight friends, whether single or in couples. Single friends were preferred, whether gay or straight. Thirty-one percent of all respondents, 33% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they discuss these issues with both gay and straight friends who are single and in couples. Twenty-six percent of all respondents, 17% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they discuss these matters with neither. Thus 34% of all respondents stated they discuss these issues with gay friends, 9% stated single friends, 31% stated both, all whether the friends are single or in couples, and 26% stated neither. Again, these women show a preference, when discussing relationship issues, for discussing them with friends who are gay. At the same time, 26%, over one quarter, stated they do not discuss these matters with friends whether straight or gay and whether single or in couples. It is noted that a number of respondents gave more than one answer.

CHAPTER 11  
QUESTIONS REGARDING RELIGION

Question 67: I was raised in which/no religion. Forty-eight percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 63% of the older, stated they were raised Protestant. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated they were raised Catholic. None of the respondents stated they were raised Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, atheist, or agnostic. Seventeen percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they were raised none of the above. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they were raised in no religion. Thus, 48% of all respondents were raised Protestant, 23% Catholic and nearly 30% in either some other undesignated religion or no religion.

Question 68: My childhood religion accepted/rejected/never discussed homosexuality. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated their childhood religion accepted homosexuality. Fifty-two percent of all respondents, 50% of the younger and 53% of the older, stated their childhood religion rejected homosexuality. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated their childhood religion never discussed homosexuality. Nineteen of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated no childhood religion. Two percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer the question. That 25% of all respondents stated that their childhood religion never discussed homosexuality is arguably both positive and negative. The overall implication somehow is that it is negative in that acceptance of

homosexuality was not conveyed. At the same time, the overall implication somehow is that it is positive in that rejection of homosexuality was not conveyed. Rejection of homosexuality is both overt and silent through secrecy and shame. It is noteworthy that in light of 19% of all respondents stating no childhood religion, 52% of all respondents stated their childhood religion rejected homosexuality. Only 2% of all respondents stated their childhood religion accepted homosexuality. Thus, religions which on one hand appear to promote love and acceptance, also appear to foment the opposite.

Question 69: As a gay teenager, I felt accepted/rejected by my religion. None of the respondents stated they felt accepted by their religion as a gay teenager. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they felt rejected by their religion as a gay teenager. Fifty percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 69% of the older, stated they didn't yet know they were gay. This high percentage of the older respondents speaks to the delayed realization or acceptance of homosexual orientation in the past as discussed in the review of the literature. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated no religion as a teenager. Two percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer the question. Essentially one-fourth of all respondents stated they felt rejected by their religion as a gay teen, one-fourth of all respondents stated no religion as a teenager and half of all respondents stated they didn't yet know they were gay. None of the respondents stated they felt accepted by their religion as a gay teenager. One respondent did not answer the question. Historically, the tendency has been to point to the gay teenager,

or adult, as being out of the norm. Another perspective may be to examine the role and influence of religion when it fosters a sense of rejection in its members while as a rule teaching love and acceptance.

Question 70: I consider myself now to be which/no religion. Forty-four percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 56% of the older, stated they consider themselves now to be Protestant. These numbers are consistent overall with the respondents' stated childhood religion questions sixty-seven and sixty-nine in which 48% of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 63% of the older, stated they were raised Protestant. Ten percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they consider themselves now to be Catholic. These numbers are considerably lower than those given for the respondent's stated childhood religions in which 23% of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated they were raised Catholic. None of the respondents stated they consider themselves now to be Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist or atheist and these numbers are identical to those given for the respondents' stated childhood religion. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they consider themselves now to be agnostic compared to none of the respondents' stated childhood religion. This increase is in the older group. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they consider themselves now to be none of these religions, compared to 17% of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 9% of the older, regarding their stated childhood religion. Twenty-one percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they consider themselves now to be of no religion, compared to 13% of all respondents, 25% of the younger and

6% of the older, regarding their stated childhood religion. In effect, 54% of all respondents consider themselves now to be Protestant, 44%, or Catholic, 10%, compared to 71% of all respondents who stated they were raised Protestant, 48%, or Catholic 23%. The largest decline has been in the Catholic religion, some 13%. At the same time, the numbers are up for those stating they consider themselves now to be none of the listed religions or of no religion. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they themselves now to be none of the listed religions compared to 17% of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 9% of the older, regarding their stated childhood religion. The increase is in the older group. Twenty-one percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they consider themselves now to be of no religion compared to 13% of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 6% of the older, regarding their stated childhood religion. The largest increase in this instance is in the younger group. Overall, 44% of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 28% of the older, consider themselves now to be none of the listed religions or of no religion compared to 30% of all respondents, 56% of the younger and 15% of the older, regarding their stated childhood religion. These figures reflect a departure from religion in 14% of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 13% of the older. These numbers are reflective of those discussed in the review of the literature for religions and their memberships as a whole. In the instance of gay people departing religion, some of the departure may be due to the rejection of homosexuality by religions.

Question 71: I consider myself to be religious, spiritual, both or neither. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they

consider themselves now to be religious. Forty percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 38% of the older, stated they consider themselves now to be spiritual. Forty-six percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 50% of the older, consider themselves now to be both religious and spiritual. Eight percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 3% of the older, consider themselves now to be neither religious nor spiritual. Despite the responses and figures regarding religion in question seventy, it is noteworthy that 92% of all respondents, 82% of the younger and 97% of the older, consider themselves to be religious and/or spiritual. This points to a compelling need for the presence and expression of the religious and/or spiritual in the lives of gay women. It also indicates that for most, meeting this compelling need is sought, somewhere, outside of traditional religion. It is noted that based on information from question forty-seven, 12% of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 11% of the older, describe their relationship as primarily spiritual. Further research is needed to determine how many, if any, gay women consider spirituality to be a part of their relationships.

Question 72: I feel accepted/not accepted by the religion of my adulthood. Fifty-four percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 59% of the older, stated they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. Twenty-seven percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they do not feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated no religion or did not answer the question. It is noted that 54% of all respondents stated they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood, while 52% of all respondents feel that their childhood religion rejected

homosexuality, 25% of all respondents feel that their childhood religion never discussed homosexuality and 25% of all respondents stated that as a gay teenager they felt rejected by their religion, none felt accepted by their religion as a gay teenager and 50% of all respondents stated they didn't yet know they were gay as a teenager.

Question 73: As an adult, I attend religious services frequently, infrequently or never. Forty-six percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 50% of the older, stated that as an adult, they attend religious services frequently. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated that as an adult, they attend religious services infrequently. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they never attend religious services. Thus, 75% of all respondents, 63% of the younger and 81% of the older, attend religious services frequently or infrequently. One-quarter of all respondents, slightly over one-third of younger and one-fifth of older, stated they never attend religious services. Again, this speaks to religion and/or spirituality being a compelling need for the majority of these gay women.

Question 74: I do not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at my place of worship because I fear accusations, have no interest in teaching or no place of worship. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they do not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at their place of worship because they fear accusations. Sixty percent of all respondents, 50% of the younger and 66% of the older, stated they have no interest in teaching. Thirty-three percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they do not attend a place of worship. Four percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger

and none of the older, did not answer the question. Thus, fear of accusations is not a significant factor in these gay women's reason for not teaching classes or volunteering with teens or children at their place of worship. It is a factor for only 3% of the older group and for none of the younger. Although the percentage is negligible for the older group, it is noteworthy that none of the younger group stated fear of accusations. This is likely due to different socialization of the two groups. By being more out of the closet, younger gay women dispel the stereotypes of homosexuals preying on children and teens which previously imprisoned gay women and remains a carry-over for some older gay women.

Question 75: I attend a gay church, a church that accepts or does not accept homosexuality or no church. Fifty percent of the younger, older and all respondents stated they attend a gay church. Eight percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they attend a church that accepts homosexuality. Eight percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they attend a church that does not accept homosexuality. Thirty-three percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they attend no church. Half of these women attend a gay church and 58% attend a gay church or a church that accepts homosexuality. Eight percent attend a church that does not accept homosexuality. Nearly one-third do not attend church. It is noted that 50% of all respondents stated they attend a gay church, 58% stated they attend a gay church or a church that accepts homosexuality, 46% of all respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services frequently and 54% stated they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. Again, it is noted that 92% of all respondents, 82% of the younger and 97% of the older, stated they consider themselves to be religious and/or spiritual. These gay women appear to be seeking to fulfill a compelling need in an accepting religion.

Question 76: I believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, Yahweh, Allah, Higher Power, or none of the above. Seventy-five percent of all respondents, 53% of the younger and 88% of the older, stated they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit. Another 15% of all respondents, 26% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they believe in a Higher Power. Two percent of all respondents, 5% of the younger and none of the older, stated they believe in Yahweh and the same number stated they believe in

Allah. Six percent of all respondents, 11% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they believe in none of the above. It is noted that several respondents gave more than one answer. These figures speak further to the apparently compelling need of these women for the presence and expression of the religious and/or spiritual in their lives.

Question 77: I believe in eternal life. Fifty-eight percent of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 50% of the older, stated they believe in eternal life. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 34% of the older, stated they do not believe in eternal life. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they are not sure. It is noted that while 92% of all respondents, 82% of the younger and 97% of the older, stated they consider themselves to be religious and/or spiritual and while 75% of all respondents, 53% of the younger and 88% of the older, stated they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit and another 15% of all respondents, 26% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they believe in a Higher Power, a considerably lower number, 58% of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 50% of the older, stated they believe in eternal life.

Question 78: I believe eternal life is the result of faith in God, good works, both, neither, not sure or do not believe in eternal life. Twenty-seven percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they believe eternal life is the result of faith in God. None of the respondents stated they believe eternal life is the result of good works alone. Forty-eight percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 53% of the older, stated they believe eternal life is the result of both faith in God and good works. Six percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated neither. Thirteen percent of younger, older and all respondents stated

they are not sure. Six percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they do not believe in eternal life. It is noted that some of these numbers are consistent with those in question seventy-seven in which 13% of all respondents also stated they were not sure whether they believe in eternal life. At the same time these numbers are inconsistent in that 29% of all respondents in question seventy-seven stated they do not believe in eternal life and 6% of all respondents in the current question, seventy-eight, stated they do not believe in eternal life. Nevertheless 75% of all respondents, 63% of the younger and 81% of the older, stated a belief in eternal life based on faith in God and good works.

Question 79: I believe it is a sin to be gay but I am/not forgiven, it is not a sin or not sure. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they believe it is a sin to be gay but they are forgiven. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they believe it is a sin to be gay and they are not forgiven. Sixty-seven percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 81% of the older, stated they believe it is not a sin to be gay. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they are not sure. Thus two-thirds of all respondents stated they believe it is not a sin to be gay but are divided over whether they are forgiven, 6%, or not forgiven, 15%, and 13% are not sure. Nearly three-quarters of all respondents indicate a reconciliation of their sexual orientation with their religion and/or spirituality. Over one-quarter of all respondents indicate some degree of uncertainty or struggle in this area. Again, 75% of all respondents stated they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit and another 15% of all respondents stated they believe in a Higher Power with 90% of all respondents stating

a belief in God or a Higher Power. In addition, 58% of all respondents stated they believe in eternal life and 75% of all respondents stated a belief in eternal life based on faith in God and good works.

Question 80: I feel loved and blessed by God. Seventy-one percent of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 72% of the older, stated they feel very much loved and blessed by God. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they feel somewhat loved and blessed by God. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they feel not much loved and blessed by God. Eight percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they are not sure. Six percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they do not believe in God which is identical to the figures from question seventy-six above. Thus 84% of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 88% of the older, stated they feel very much or somewhat loved and blessed by God; 2% of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they feel not much loved and blessed by God; and 8% of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they are not sure. Eighty-four percent of all respondents stating they feel very much or somewhat loved and blessed by God, is essentially consistent with the 81% of all respondents stating in question seventy-six that they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit but lower than the 98% who stated in the same question that they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, 81%, or a Higher Power, 17%.

Question 81: I feel that believing in God and being gay is/not in conflict, some of both, not sure or do not believe in God. Six percent of the younger, older and all

respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay is in conflict and 63% of the younger, older and all respondents stated they feel it is not in conflict. Seventeen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated they believe it is some of both. Eight percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they are not sure. Again, as in question seventy-six and eighty above, 6% of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they do not believe in God. Approximately two-thirds of younger, older and all respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay is not in conflict. Similarly, approximately two-thirds of all respondents in question seventy-nine above stated they believe it is not a sin to be gay. In that same question, an additional 6%, for a total of 73%, nearly three-quarters of these gay women, indicate a reconciliation of their sexual orientation with their religion and/or spirituality. In question eighty-one, while two-thirds of all respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay is not in conflict, 31%, nearly one-third, indicate some degree of conflict or uncertainty. Thus 28% to 31% of all respondents indicate some degree of feeling unresolved regarding their belief in God and being gay. An important area for further research is to more closely examine this conflict in the lives of gay women and determine its etiology, whether the product of rejection by religion, societal homophobia, something inherent or some combination of all or something else altogether.

Question 82: I feel I can turn to my place of worship in time of need. Twenty-seven percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they feel they can completely turn to their place of worship in time of need. Twenty-nine

percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they can somewhat turn to their place of worship in time of need. Ten percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they feel they cannot at all turn to their place of worship in time of need. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they are not sure. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated no place to worship. Two percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer the question. Overall, 56% of the younger, older and all respondents stated they feel they can completely or somewhat turn to their place of worship in time of need. Sixteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated not at all or they are not sure. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 35% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated no place to worship. Two percent, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer the question. It is noted that 54% of all respondents stated in question seventy-two above that they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood which is consistent with 56% of all respondents in the current question stating they feel they can completely or somewhat turn to their place of worship in time of need.

Question 83: I feel accepted by my fellow worshippers/congregation. Forty-two percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Nineteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated they feel somewhat accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they feel they are not at

all accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they are not sure. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 25% of the older, stated no place to worship. Two percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer the question. Overall, 61% of all respondents, 57% of the younger and 63% of the older, stated they feel completely or somewhat accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Eight percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 12% of the older, stated they feel not at all accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation or they are not sure. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 25% of the older, stated no place to worship. Two percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer the question. It is noted that these figures differ slightly from those in question eighty-two above. Comparing the two questions, 56% of the younger, older and all respondents feel they can turn to their place of worship in time of need; 61% of all respondents, 57% of the younger and 63% of the older, stated they feel completely or somewhat accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Sixteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 12% of the older, stated they feel they cannot at all turn to their place of worship in time of need or they are not sure, 8% of all respondents, none of the younger and 12% of the older, stated they feel not at all accepted by their place of worship or they are not sure. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated no place of worship in question eighty-two and 29% of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 25% of the older, stated no place of worship in question eighty-three. Two percent of all

respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer question eighty-two or question eighty-three. It is again noted that 54% of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 59% of the older, stated in question seventy-two above that they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. The figures for question seventy-two regarding acceptance by religion of adulthood, 54% of all respondents, question eighty-two regarding feeling able to turn to place of worship in time of need, 56% of all respondents, and question eighty-three regarding feeling accepted by fellow worshippers/congregation, 61% of all respondents, are basically consistent and indicate that over half to nearly two-thirds of all these respondents have significant feelings of acceptance regarding their adulthood religion. Additional research is needed to determine whether these figures parallel or differ from those of heterosexual individuals and their religion.

## CHAPTER 12

### QUESTIONS REGARDING SEXUALITY

Question 84: I had my first female - female sexual activity to orgasm under fifteen to over fifty years of age. Twenty-one percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they were under fifteen years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. It is noted that the figure for the younger respondents is nearly three times that of older respondents. Thirty-three percent of all respondents, 50% of the younger and 25% of the older, stated they were fifteen to twenty years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. Again the figure for the younger respondents is two times that of the older

respondents. Seventeen of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they were twenty-one to twenty-five years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they were twenty-six to thirty years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. Ten percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they were thirty-one to thirty-five years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they were thirty-six to forty years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they were forty to forty-nine years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. It is noted that the younger respondents are under the age of forty. None of the respondents stated they were over fifty years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. Fifty percent of the younger respondents stated were fifteen to twenty years old when they had their first homosexual activity as described and all of the younger respondents had had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm by the time they were twenty-five years old. Twenty-five percent of the older respondents stated they were fifteen to twenty years old when they had their first homosexual activity as described. The majority of the older respondents had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm over many years ranging from under fifteen years old to forty-nine years old. Fifty-seven percent of the older respondents had had their first homosexual activity as described by the age of twenty-five, and 43% between the ages of twenty-six and forty-nine with the

ages of thirty-one to thirty-five being the age for 16% of the older respondents. It is noteworthy that 18% of the older respondents stated they were thirty-six to forty-nine years old when they had their first homosexual activity as described. Thus, the older group was twice as old as the younger group by the time they all had had their first homosexual activity as described. These figures speak to the delay in recognizing and/or accepting homosexual orientation by the older respondents as previously discussed in question twenty-four regarding age when first realized homosexual, and in the review of the literature. It also speaks to the fluidity in female sexuality as previously discussed in question forty-three regarding opposite sex partner relationships, question fifty-four regarding homosexual activity with a woman while married to a man and in the review of the literature. Additional research is needed to compare these figures regarding realization of sexual orientation and commencement of sexual activity in heterosexual individuals.

Question 85: To me, the most important thing about sex is having an orgasm, partner having an orgasm, both having an orgasm, foreplay or cuddling after sex. Six percent of all respondents, 4% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated that to them, the most important this about sex is having an orgasm. Seventeen percent of all respondents, 26% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated the most important thing about sex is their partner having an orgasm. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 30% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated the most important thing about sex is both their partner and them having an orgasm. Twenty-one percent of all respondents, 17% of the younger and 23% of the older, stated the most important thing is foreplay. Twenty-seven percent of all respondents, 22% of the younger and 30% of the older,

stated the most important thing is cuddling after sex. It is noted that many respondents checked more than one answer. Approximately two out of ten stated that either they, 6%, or their partner, 17%, having an orgasm is the most important thing about sex. Approximately three out ten respondents stated that both they and their partner having an orgasm is the most important thing about sex, making just over one half of all respondents stating orgasm as the most important thing about sex. Similarly, approximately two out of ten respondents stated that foreplay is the most important thing about sex and approximately three out of ten stated cuddling after sex is the most important thing about sex, making just under half of all respondents stating foreplay before sex and/or cuddling after sex is the most important thing about sex. Thirty percent of the younger respondents stated that both they and their partner having an orgasm is the most important thing about sex and 30% of the older respondents stated cuddling after sex is the most important thing. Twenty-six percent of the younger respondents stated their partner having an orgasm and 28% of the older respondents stated that both they and their partner having an orgasm is the most important thing about sex. Twenty-two percent of the younger respondents stated cuddling after sex and 23% of the older respondents stated foreplay is the most important thing about sex. Seventeen percent of the younger respondents stated foreplay and 13% of the older respondents stated their partner having an orgasm is the most important thing about sex. Four percent of the younger and 6% of the older respondents stated that having an orgasm is the most important thing about sex.

Question 86: I generally have sex once a week, two to three times a week, once a month, two to three times a month, once every two to three months, once every

six months or once every twelve months. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 25% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they generally have sex once a week. Thirty-five percent of all respondents, 50% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they generally have sex two to three times per week. Thus, 50% of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 37% of the older, stated they have generally have sex one to three times per week, with the younger respondents having sex twice as often as older respondents each week. Eight percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they generally have sex once a month. Nineteen percent of the younger, older and all respondents stated they generally have sex two to three times a month. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they generally have sex once every two to three months. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they generally have sex once every six months or longer. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they generally have sex once every twelve months or longer. It is noted that 50% of the younger respondents stated they generally have sex two to three times per week and 50% of the older respondents, stated they generally have sex from once a week to once a month. Ninety-four percent of the younger respondents stated they generally have sex at least two to three times a month and all of the younger respondents stated they have sex at least once every two to three months. Sixty-nine percent of the older respondents stated they generally have sex at least two to three times a month and 31% stated they generally have sex from once every two to three months to once every twelve months or longer. These figures are essentially consistent with those in the literature review. These figures are also

indicative of an interest in sex and an active sex life among gay women, particularly the younger. This refutes previous thinking that women have little or no interest in sex other than for procreation, or "having babies" as discussed in the literature review. More research is needed to determine if these figures parallel or differ from those of heterosexual individuals and particularly how they compare at various stages of life.

Question 87: I consider sex to be most/very/not very/least important part of my relationship or no relationship. Eight percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they consider sex to be the most important part of their relationship. Thirty-five percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 38% of the older, stated they consider sex to be a very important part of their relationship. Thirty-three percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 34% of the older, stated they consider sex to be not a very important part of their relationship. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the older and 16% of the younger, stated they consider sex to be the least important part of their relationship. Eight percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated no relationship. Two percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and none of the older, did not answer the question. Overall, 43% of all respondents, 50% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated they consider sex to be the most important part or a very important part of their relationship. Thirty-three percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 34% of the older, stated they consider sex to be not a very important of their relationship. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they consider sex to be the least important part of their relationship. Of these with relationship who answered the question, the respondents were fairly evenly

split regarding the importance of sex in their relationship. Forty-three percent of all respondents stated they consider sex to be the most or a very important part of their relationship and 46% of all respondents stated they consider sex to be the least or not a very important part of their relationship. The younger and older respondents were similar in two areas and opposite in two areas. Similarly, 31% of the younger and 38% of the older respondents stated they consider sex a very important part of their relationship. Thirty-one percent of the younger and 34% of the older respondents stated they consider sex to be not a very important part of their relationship. Conversely, 19% of the younger and 3% of the older respondents stated they consider sex to be the most important part of their relationship and 6% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they consider sex to be the least important part of their relationship. These figures are consistent with those in the literature review regarding how sex is viewed and valued by younger and older gay women. More research is needed to compare these figures with them of heterosexual individuals and how they change over the life span.

Question 88: I consider my sex life very/somewhat satisfying or somewhat/very frustrating. Fifty-two percent of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 44% of the older, stated they consider their sex life very satisfying. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they consider their sex life somewhat satisfying. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated they consider their sex life somewhat frustrating. Ten percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they consider their sex life very frustrating. Overall, 77% of all respondents,

88% of the younger and 72% of the older, stated they consider their sex life to be the very or somewhat satisfying. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 12% of the younger and 29% of the older, stated they consider their sex life to be somewhat or very frustrating. Thus approximately three-quarters of all respondents stated satisfaction with their sex life and approximately one-quarter of all respondents stated frustration with their sex life. Younger respondents stated higher satisfaction, 88%, than older respondents, 72% and lower frustration, 12% than older respondents, approximately 29%. The importance and frequency of sex in a relationship and fulfillment of needs regarding foreplay, orgasm and cuddling after sex are likely significant factors in the level of satisfaction or frustration felt by gay women as is likely the case for most individuals regardless of sexual orientation. Again, more research is needed in this area including ways of increasing sex life satisfaction for all individuals, male and female, regardless of sexual orientation and their amenability to such.

Question 89: I feel that my partner and I are very/somewhat sexually compatible, somewhat/very sexually incompatible or no partner. Fifty-two percent of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated they feel they and their partner are very sexually compatible, some three-quarters of the younger and less than half of the older respondents. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated they feel they and their partner are somewhat sexually compatible, approximately one out of ten of younger respondents and one out of four of older respondents. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they feel they and their partner are somewhat sexually

incompatible. None of the respondents stated they feel they and their partner are very sexually incompatible. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated no partner. Thus, 75% of all respondents, 88% of the younger and 69% of the older, stated they feel they and their partner are very or somewhat sexually compatible. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older stated they feel they and their partner are somewhat sexually incompatible and none of the respondents stated they and their partner are very sexually incompatible. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 28% of the older, stated no partner. Nearly all of the respondents with partners stated they feel they and their partner are very or somewhat sexually compatible with one respondent, age fifties, stating somewhat sexually incompatible and no one stating very sexually incompatible.

These figures are generally consistent with those regarding sex life satisfaction in question eighty-eight above. Fifty-two percent of all respondents consider their sex life very satisfying and feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Sixty-nine percent of the younger respondents consider their sex life very satisfying and 75% feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Forty-four percent of the older respondents stated they consider their sex life very satisfying and 41% feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Similarly, 25% of all respondents feel that their sex life is somewhat satisfying and 23% of all respondents feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually compatible. Nineteen percent of the younger respondents feel that their sex life is somewhat satisfying and 13% feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually compatible.

Twenty-eight percent of the older respondents feel that this sex life is somewhat satisfying and 28% also feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually compatible. Thirteen percent of all respondents feel that their sex life is somewhat frustrating and 2% feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually incompatible. Six percent of the younger feel their sex life is somewhat frustrating and none of the younger feel they and their partner are somewhat sexually incompatible. Sixteen percent of the older feel their sex life is somewhat frustrating and 3% feel they and their partner are somewhat sexually incompatible. Ten percent of all respondents feel that their sex life is very frustrating and none feel that they and their partner are very sexually incompatible. Six percent of the younger respondents feel that their sex life is very frustrating and none feel that they and their partner are very sexually incompatible. Sixteen percent of the older respondents feel that their sex life is very frustrating and none feel that they and their partner are very sexually incompatible. Overall, 77% of all respondents consider their sex life to be very or somewhat satisfying and 78% feel that they and their partner are very or somewhat compatible. Thirteen percent of all respondents feel their sex life is somewhat frustrating and 2% feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually incompatible. Ten percent of all respondents feel their sex life is very frustrating and none feel they and their partner are very sexually incompatible. Twenty-three percent of all respondents, 13% younger and 28% older stated no partner. Again, further research is needed in the area of sexual satisfaction and compatibility for gay women and how these areas compare for other individuals, male and female, regardless of sexual orientation.

Question 90: My partner and I agree on type and frequency of sex. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated they and their partner always agree on type and frequency of sex. Forty-four percent of all respondents, 56% of the younger and 38% of the older, stated they and their partner usually agree on type and frequency of sex. Nineteen of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 22% of the older, stated they and their partner sometimes agree on type and frequency of sex. None of the respondents stated they and their partner seldom agree on type and frequency of sex. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they and their partner never agree on type and frequency of sex. Sixty-nine percent of all respondents, 87% of the younger and 60% of the older, stated they and their partner always or usually agree on type and frequency of sex. Eighty-eight percent of all respondents, 100% of the younger and 82% of the older, stated they and their partner always, 25%, usually, 44% or sometimes, 19%, agree on type and frequency of sex. Further research is needed to determine how this pattern compares to other groups.

Question 91: Regarding the initiation of sex, I/my partner generally initiate sex, both equally, no comment or no partner. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 19% of the older, stated they generally initiate sex. Thirteen percent of younger, older and all respondents stated their partner generally initiates sex. Fifty percent of all respondents, 63% of the younger and 44% of the older, stated they and their partner both equally initiate sex. Eight percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated no comment. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated no partner. Half, 50% of all

respondents, 63% of the younger and 44% of the older, stated they and their partner both equally initiate sex. Just over one-quarter, 28%, of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 32% of the older, stated they or their partner generally initiate sex. Just under half, 23% of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 25% of the older, stated no comment or no partner. Fifty percent of all respondents stated they and their partner equally initiate sex, 52% stated they feel they and their partner are very sexually compatible and 52% stated they consider their sex life very satisfying. Again, further research is needed to examine what relationship, if any, exists among these factors and how they influence each other both for gay women and other groups.

Question 92: Regarding sexual activity, my partner and I usually perform oral sex, hand-clitoris/vagina sex, use dildos and/or vibrators or participate in S&M (sado masochism). Forty-seven percent of all respondents, 41% of the younger and 52% of the older, stated they and their partner usually perform oral sex. Thirty-one percent of all respondents, 28% of the younger and 33% of the older, stated they and their partner usually perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. Thirteen percent all respondents, 18% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they and their partner usually use dildos and/or vibrators. Four percent of all respondents, 10% of the younger and none of the older, stated they and their partner usually use dildos and/or vibrators. Four percent of all respondents, 10% of the younger and none of the older, stated they and their partner usually participate in S&M (Sado Masochism). Four percent of all respondents, 3% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated no partner or did not answer the question. It is noted that the forty-eight total respondents gave ninety-three answers to this question, thus answering one or more times. Sixteen younger respondents gave thirty-nine

answers and forty-eight older respondents gave fifty-four answers, indicating variety in sexual activity for both groups, particularly the younger. Overall, 78% of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 85% of the older, stated they and their partner usually perform oral sex and/or hand-clitoris/vagina sex. Thirteen percent of all respondents, 18% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they and their partner usually use dildos and/or vibrators. The younger group showed more variation in sexual activity with 18% using dildos and/or vibrators and 10% participating in S&M (Sado Masochism) compared to 9% of the older respondents using dildos and/or vibrators and none participating in S&M (Sado Masochism). These figures are comparable to those in the literature review. Additional research is needed to determine any parallel or difference in this and other groups, male and female, regardless of sexual orientation.

Question 93: Regarding orgasm, I/my partner/both/neither consistently reach orgasm or no partner. Thirteen percent of younger, older and all respondents stated they consistently reach orgasm. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, stated their partner consistently reaches orgasm. Sixty-three percent of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 56% of the older, stated both they and their partner consistently reach orgasm. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, stated neither they nor their partner consistently reach orgasm. Eight percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 13% of the older stated no partner. Six percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 3% of the older, did not answer the question.

Overall, 82% of all respondents, 88% of the younger and 78% of older, stated they and/or their partner consistently reach orgasm. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, stated neither they nor their partner consistently reach orgasm. Fourteen percent of all respondents, stated no partner, 8%, or did not answer the question, 6%. It is noted that none of the younger respondents stated no partner and 13% of the younger respondents did not answer the question while 13% of the older respondents stated no partner and 3% did not answer the question. It is noted that 82% of all the respondents stated they and/or their partner consistently reach orgasm which is similar to figures in question eighty-eight where 77% of all respondents stated they consider their sex life very or somewhat satisfying and to figures in question eighty-nine where 75% of all respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very or somewhat sexually compatible. Eighty-eight percent of the younger respondents stated they and/or their partner consistently reach orgasm, 88% stated they consider their sex life very or somewhat satisfying and 88% of the younger respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very or somewhat sexually compatible. Seventy-eight percent of the older respondents stated they and/or their partner consistently reach orgasm, 72% of the older respondents stated they consider their sex life to be very or somewhat satisfying and 69% of the older respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very or somewhat sexually compatible. These figures indicate ten to nearly 20% higher consistency, satisfaction and compatibility in the sex life of younger respondents. More research is needed to determine how these figures compare with other groups and their effect on overall relationship quality and commitment.

Question 94: If I could change one thing about my sexual relationship it would be more sex/less sex/better sex/more creative sex or no changes. Thirty-nine percent of all respondents, 38% of the younger and 40% of the older, stated that if they could change one thing about their sexual relationship, it would be for more sex. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated the only thing they would change would be for less sex. Eight percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated the only thing they would change would be for better sex. Sixteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 17% of the older, stated the only thing they would change would be for more creative sex. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents, 44% of the younger and 23% of the older, stated they would make no changes. Six percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 9% of the older, did not answer the question. Sixty-three percent of all respondents stated the only thing they would change is more sex, 39%, better sex, 8%, and more creative sex, 16%. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents stated they would make no changes. It is noted that these statements do not necessarily indicate dissatisfaction with sexual relationship and may simply indicate interest in making it even more enjoyable and fulfilling.

Question 95: I would leave a relationship over sexual incompatibility/sexual infidelity/both/neither or no comment. Four percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they would leave a relationship over sexual incompatibility. Forty-four percent of younger, older and all respondents stated they would leave a relationship over sexual infidelity. Twenty-seven percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they would leave a

relationship over both sexual incompatibility and infidelity. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 13% of the older, stated they would leave a relationship over neither. Six percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated no comment. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, did not answer the question. Seventy-five percent of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 78% of the older, stated they would leave a relationship over either sexual incompatibility and/or sexual infidelity. These figures indicate the importance of sexual compatibility and fidelity to these respondents. Again, further research is needed to determine any parallel or difference in this and other groups, male and female, regardless of sexual orientation.

Question 96: My partner and I show affection in public seldom, sometimes, often, never, no comment or no partner. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of older, stated they and their partner seldom show affection in public. Thirty-eight percent of all respondents, 50% of the younger and 31% of the older, stated they and their partner sometimes show affection in public. Seventeen percent of all respondents, 31% of the younger and 9% of the older, stated they and their partner often show affection in public. Twenty-five percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 34% of the older, stated they and their partner never show affection in public. Four percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 6% of the older, stated no comment or did not answer the question. Fifteen percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 16% of the older, stated no partner.

Fifty-five percent all respondents, 81% of the younger and 40% of the older, stated they and their partner show affection in public sometimes or often. Twenty-five

percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 34% of the older, stated they and their partner never show affection in public. It is noted that nearly one-third of the older respondents stated they and their partner never show affection in public. This is likely a result of invisibility and internalized homophobia due to their earlier socialization as previously discussed and in the literature review. More research is needed in this area to determine any relationship between fear, being out of the closet and any expression of affection in public and their effect on the relationships of gay women.

Question 97: I feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know/do not know I'm gay, both or neither. Eight percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 6% of the older, stated they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know they are gay. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older stated they feel comfortable showing to heterosexual women who do not know they are gay. Fifty-four percent of all respondents, 69% of the younger and 47% of the older, stated they feel comfortable with both. Thirty-one percent of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated they feel comfortable with neither. Nearly two-thirds, 64%, of all respondents, 82% of the younger and 56% of the older, stated they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do and/or who do not know they are gay. Less than one-third, 31%, of all respondents, 13% of the younger and 41% of the older, stated they feel comfortable with neither. Again, the younger respondents, 82%, stated more comfort with showing affection to heterosexual women, who do or do not know they are gay, than older respondents, 56%. Again, this is likely due to fear based on

internalized homophobia. More research is needed to examine this area and its effect on interpersonal relationships between straight and gay women.

Question 98: I feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to me when they know/do not know I'm gay, both or neither. Two percent of all respondents, none of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they know they are gay. Eight percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 3% of the older, stated they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they do not know they are gay. Forty-four percent of all respondents, 56% of the younger and 38% of the older, stated they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they do and/or do not know they are gay. Forty-two percent of all respondents, 19% of the younger and 53% of the older stated they feel comfortable with neither. Four percent of all respondents, 6% of the younger and 3% of the older, did not answer the question. Over half, 54%, of all respondents, 75% of the younger and 44% of the older, stated they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them whether they do or do not know they are gay. Less than half, 42%, 19% of the younger and 53% of the older, stated they feel comfortable with neither. Again, the younger respondents, 75%, stated more comfort with heterosexual women showing affection to them whether they do or do not know they are gay, than older respondents, 44%. Both younger and older respondents showed less comfort with receiving affection from heterosexual women, 75% of the younger and 44% of the older, than showing it, 82%, younger and 56%, older. Again, this is likely due to fear

based on internalized homophobia. More research is needed to examine this area and its effect on interpersonal relationships between gay and straight women.

## CHAPTER 13

### AGE UNDER TWENTY

#### Demographics – Under Twenty

Three surveys, 6.3% of the total, were returned marked in the age under twenty category. One each was marked white, African-American and Hispanic. The survey marked white described herself as being a high school graduate, blue collar with an annual income between \$20,000 and \$40,000 per year. The survey marked African-American described herself as having a technical school education, no employment with annual income under \$20,000 per year. The survey marked Hispanic described

herself as having a GED, no employment with an annual income under \$20,000 per year.

#### Fear – Under Twenty

In the questions designed to measure fear of discovery and reprisals, the respondents provided the following information. One respondent felt that her being gay did not keep her from working with children and teens either in business, volunteer or church work, one respondent felt that it did and one indicated no interest in such work. All three respondents indicated they did not care who knows they are gay. Similarly, all three respondents indicated they do not wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay. One of the respondents described herself as being completely in the closet while the other two indicated they are completely out of the closet.

All three respondents indicated they have “come out” to the important people in their life. One respondent felt acceptance, one felt somewhat acceptance and one felt no noticeable difference. Two of the respondents indicated they are willing to be a mentor for a gay teen while the third respondent stated she is not. One respondent acknowledged she has been the victim of a crime because she is gay, one respondent acknowledged she has been harassed and the victim of a crime because she is gay and the third respondent stated she has not been harassed nor the victim of a crime because she is gay. Two respondents feel that most people who know them think they are gay and the third respondent is not sure. All three respondents indicated they are not afraid of people knowing they are gay and that they do not try to remain invisible

because they are gay. All three respondents stated they would not be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted. One respondent feels most people accept her while the other two indicated they have not thought about whether most people accept them or don't accept them, whether or not they themselves fear other people. All three respondents denied any fear of being killed, being harmed physically, being raped, losing their job, having to move from their home or being harassed if people knew they are gay. All three respondents feel there is support for their relationship by family, friends, and neighbors and one of the respondents also feels support by co-workers but none feel support by society. Two respondents feel their community accepts them and one marked none of the above to the possible choices of accepts me, rejects me, fears me, does not understand me. One respondent feels not at all afraid of what people would do if they knew she is gay and the others noted they have not thought about it. All three respondents stated they and their partner openly share the same bedroom.

By race, the white respondent indicated less fear and more openness with a higher sense of acceptance by others. The same respondent indicated she was not sure if most people who know her think she is gay whereas both of the other two respondents indicated they feel that most people who know them think they are gay.

#### Identity – Under Twenty

All three respondents realized they were gay when they were under eighteen years of age. All three indicated they are living the life they were born to live. Two respondents noted they were considered a tomboy while growing up and the third

stated no comment. One respondent considers both herself and her partner butch. The other two consider themselves neither butch nor femme with one who considers her partner butch and one who considers her partner neither. All three respondents stated they are glad they are gay and all three denied they would rather be straight. Further, one respondent feels she was created to be homosexual while the other two are not sure. All three stated they do not feel guilty, confused or ashamed because they are gay.

One respondent acknowledged she has gay relatives including mother, sister(s) and paternal aunt/uncle/cousin. One respondent stated she did not have any gay relatives and the other respondent stated she was not sure. The respondent who stated she didn't have any gay relatives also stated she does not suspect she has gay relatives. The other two respondents stated they are not sure if they have gay relatives.

All three respondents stated they go to gay bars and watch gay movies. Two of the respondents also stated they read gay books and magazines and go to gay resorts and campgrounds.

All three respondents stated they have not attempted suicide for any reason including shame, rejection, fear of rejection or upset over the breakup of a gay or straight relationship. One respondent acknowledged going to individual counseling and is not sure if her counselor was gay or straight. She feels counseling was not helpful. The other two respondents stated they have not been to counseling. All three respondents feel they are in good physical, emotional and mental health.

#### Relationships – Under Twenty

One respondent indicated she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence as a child. She indicated that as an adult, she has experienced no abuse with a same sex partner, sexual abuse with an opposite sex partner and physical abuse, rape and crime against her person by someone who was not a partner. The other respondents denied any abuse either as a child or as an adult.

One respondent stated she has had two to three relationships counting the one she is currently in. The other two respondents stated they have had four to six relationships counting the one they are currently in. The respondent with two to three relationships stated she has been in her current relationship one to five years. One of the respondents stated she has been in her current relationship under one year and the other for one to five years. One respondent described her relationship as primarily sexual, one primarily affectionate and one as a combination of emotional, spiritual and affectionate. The latter considers herself committed to her partner whereas the other two noted no comment.

One respondent noted the soonest she has begun living with someone after meeting them is one week and the other two noted one month. The respondent who considers herself committed to her partner also considers herself married but has not made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony but stated she would marry if she could legally. The other two respondents stated they do not consider themselves married, have not made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony and would not marry if they could legally. Those same two respondents stated the longest relationship they have ever had is under one year while the other respondent stated the longest relationship she has ever had is one to five years.

All three respondents stated they have not been involved with a woman while either they or the woman was married to a man.

One respondent, the same one who considers herself committed and married to her partner, stated the longest she has gone between relationships is one to five years while the other two indicated one month or two to six months. When their relationships have broken up, one respondent acknowledged she usually initiated the breakup and the other respondents noted no comment.

One respondent feels accepted by gay women in couples when single or in a relationship. One respondent feels accepted by both single gay women and gay women in couples whether she is single or in a relationship. The third respondent did not answer the two questions.

All three respondents stated they and their partner do not play male-female roles and do not divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. Two respondents stated they feel very satisfied with their relationship and one stated she feels somewhat satisfied.

Two of the respondents stated they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight and male and female. The third respondent stated she mainly has friends who are gay, both male and female. The same respondent stated the males she is friends with are gay singles. The other two respondents stated the males they are friends with are mainly gay and straight, both couples and singles. One of those two respondents feels gay men are somewhat offensive while the other two respondents feel they are not offensive. One respondent stated she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings and relationship issues with both gay and straight couples and single friends.

One respondent stated she discusses these matters with gay couples and single friends. One respondent denied discussing these matters with gay or straight couples and single friends.

#### Religion – Under Twenty

The religion section of the survey garnered the following information. Two respondents stated they were raised with no religion in childhood. The third respondent stated she was raised in a religion in childhood that was neither Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic. She went on to state that her childhood religion never discussed homosexuality. All three respondents stated they had no religion as a teenager. Further, all three respondents stated they consider themselves now to be neither Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic. Two respondents consider themselves to be spiritual while the third considers herself to be neither spiritual nor religious. The respondent who indicated a childhood religion that never discussed homosexuality stated she feels accepted by the religion of her adulthood. It is noteworthy that neither her childhood nor adulthood religion is among those cornerstone religions listed. She stated she attends religious services infrequently at a gay church. She did not indicate whether she teaches classes or volunteers with teens or children at her place of worship and, if not, whether it was due to fear of accusations or because she had no interest in teaching. The other two respondents indicated they have no religion as adults and never attend religious services.

One respondent believes in a higher power and eternal life which she believes is the result of neither faith in God nor good works. One respondent believes in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit and eternal life which she believes is the result of both faith in God and good works. One respondent does not believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, Yahweh, Allah or a Higher Power and does not believe in eternal life. The first two respondents believe it is not a sin to be gay while the third respondent is not sure. One respondent feels somewhat loved and blessed by God, one feels very much loved and blessed by God and one stated she does not believe in God. The two respondents who expressed a belief in a Higher Power or God/Jesus/Holy Spirit stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are not in conflict. One respondent stated she does not believe in God. The respondent who stated she attends a gay church infrequently, feels she can turn to her place of worship in time of need somewhat and she feels completely accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. The other two respondents stated no place of worship.

#### Sexuality – Under Twenty

Two respondents reported their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm occurred when they were under fifteen years old and one reported hers at fifteen to twenty years old. The latter respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is both her partner and her having an orgasm, foreplay and cuddling after sex. One respondent stated that to her the most important thing about sex is both her partner and her having an orgasm and one respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is having an orgasm. The latter two respondents stated they

generally have sex two to three times per week and the other respondent stated she generally has sex once a week. The same two respondents stated they consider sex to be the most important part of their relationship while the other respondent did not answer the question. Two of the respondents consider their sex life to be very satisfying and the other respondent considers her sex life to be somewhat satisfying. All three respondents feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Two feel that they and their partner always agree on type and frequency of sex while the other feels that she and her partner usually agree on type and frequency of sex. Two respondents reported that they and their partners equally initiate sex. The other respondent stated no comment. All three respondents stated that regarding sexual activity, they and their partners usually perform oral sex, hand-clitoris/vagina sex, use dildos and/or vibrators and participate in S&M (sado masochism). Two respondents reported that both they and their partner consistently reach orgasm. The other respondent reported that she consistently reaches orgasm.

The two respondents who reported having the most sex, stated that if they could change one thing about their sexual relationship, it would be more sex. The other respondent stated she would make no changes. The same respondent stated she would leave a relationship over neither sexual incompatibility nor sexual infidelity. One respondent stated she would leave a relationship over both and respondent stated she would leave a sexual relationship over sexual incompatibility. The same two respondents had previously stated they consider sex to be the most important part of their relationship. All three respondents stated that they and their partner show affection in public often. Two respondents stated they feel comfortable showing

affection to heterosexual women who know they are gay and to those who don't. They also stated they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they know they are gay and when they don't. The other respondent stated she does not feel comfortable in any of the scenarios.

## CHAPTER 14

### AGE TWENTY-ONE THROUGH TWENTY-NINE

#### Demographics – Twenty-one through Twenty-nine

Seven surveys, 14.5% of the total were returned in the twenty-one through twenty-nine age group. Five surveys were marked white, one African-American White and one Hispanic. Two respondents reported their highest educational level as high school graduate, one respondent reported high school graduate with some college, one respondent reported having a college degree, one reported having a GED and two stated they dropped out of school. The respondent who reported having a GED is African-American White. The two respondents who dropped out of school are

Hispanic and white. The four other respondents, all white, reported being a high school graduate, or being a high school graduate with some college or having a college degree.

Two respondents stated their employment is professional, four stated their employment is blue collar and one stated she has no employment. Five respondents reported their annual income is under \$20,000 per year while two reported theirs at \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year. One of those respondents stated she is a high school graduate and one stated she is a high school graduate with some college. Both respondents describe their employment as professional.

#### Fear – Twenty-one through Twenty-nine

Six respondents stated that their being gay does not keep them from working with children or teens either in business, volunteer or church work. One respondent expressed no interest in such work. Five respondents stated they do not care who knows they are gay. One respondent stated she does care who knows she is gay and one respondent stated no comment. Four respondents stated they wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay while three respondents stated they did not wonder.

Five respondents stated they are completely out of the closet. One respondent stated she is somewhat out of the closet and one respondent stated she is somewhat in the closet. Consistently, five respondents stated they have come out to all of the

important people in their life. One respondent stated she has come out to most of the important people in her life and one respondent stated she has come out to some of the important people in her life. Five respondents feel that peoples' response was mainly acceptance and two feel their response was somewhat acceptance.

Two respondents stated they are willing to be a mentor for a gay teen and five stated they are not sure.

Three respondents stated they have been harassed because they are gay. One respondent stated she has been harassed because she is gay and the victim of a crime because she is gay. One respondent stated she has not been harassed or the victim of a crime because she is gay. Three respondents stated they feel that most people who know them think they are gay. Two respondents stated they feel that most people who know them probably think they are gay. One respondent stated she feels that most people who know her do not think she is gay and one respondent stated she is not sure.

Three respondents stated they are not afraid of people knowing they are gay. One respondent stated she is afraid of family and co-workers knowing she is gay. One respondent stated she is afraid of co-workers knowing she is gay, one respondent stated she is afraid of clients/customers knowing she is gay and one respondent stated she is afraid of both co-workers and clients/customers knowing she is gay. The same respondent stated she tries not much, at work only, to remain invisible because she is gay. Three respondents stated they try not much to remain invisible because they are gay and three stated they do not try at all to remain invisible because they are gay. Two respondents stated they would be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted, two stated they would be somewhat more involved and three stated

they would not be more involved. Five respondents stated they feel most people accept them and two stated they have not thought about it. One respondent stated that if people know she is gay, she fears she might be killed or harassed. One respondent stated she fears she might be raped or lose her job. Two respondents stated they fear they might be harassed. Three respondents stated they have no fear.

All seven respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by friends. Five respondents also feel support for their relationship by family. Four respondents also feel there is support for their relationship by co-workers. One respondent also feels there is support for her relationship by neighbors. One respondent feels there is support for her relationship only by friends. One respondent feels support for her relationship by family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Two respondents feel support for their relationship by family, friends and co-workers. Two respondents feel support for their relationship by family and friends. One respondent feels support for her relationship by friends and co-workers. Again, one respondent feels there is support for her relationship only by friends. Three respondents feel that overall their community accepts them. One respondent feels that overall her community does not understand her. Three respondents feel that overall their community does not accept, reject, fear or understand them. Five respondents stated they are not much afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. One respondent stated she is not at all afraid and one respondent stated she has not thought about it.

Two respondents stated they and their partner openly share the same bedroom. One respondent stated she and her partner share the same bedroom but make it look

like they have separate bedrooms. Two respondents stated they and their partner do not live together and two stated they have no partner.

#### Identity – Twenty-one through Twenty-nine

Four respondents stated they realized they were gay when they were under eighteen years of age. Three stated they realized they were gay between eighteen and twenty-nine years of age. Five respondents stated they feel they are living the life they were born to live. Two respondents stated no comment. Four respondents stated they were considered tomboys while growing up and three stated they were not considered tomboys while growing up. Three respondents stated they consider themselves butch, one considers herself butch/femme, two consider themselves femme and one considers herself neither. Two respondents consider their partner butch, two consider their partner femme, one considers her partner neither and noted she was sporty and two respondents stated they have no partner.

Four respondents stated they are glad they are gay, one stated she is not glad she is gay and two stated no comment. Six respondents stated they would not rather be straight and one respondent stated she would rather be straight. The same respondent consistently stated she is not glad she is gay.

Four respondents stated they feel they were created to be homosexual, one stated she chose to be homosexual and two stated they are not sure. All seven respondents stated they do not feel guilty, confused or ashamed because they are gay.

Four respondents stated they have gay relatives. One of the respondents stated her sister is gay, one stated her paternal aunt/uncle/cousin is gay, one stated her

maternal aunt/uncle/cousin is gay and one stated her maternal cousin is gay. Two respondents stated none of their relatives are gay and one stated she is not sure. Three respondents stated they suspect they have gay relatives. These responses were similar to those above. One respondent stated she suspects that her sister is gay, one suspects her paternal aunt/uncle/cousin is gay and one suspects her maternal aunt/uncle/cousin is gay. Three respondents stated they do not suspect they have gay relatives and one stated she is not sure.

Five respondents stated they go to gay bars. One respondent stated she also watches gay movies and reads gay books and magazines. One respondent stated she also watches gay movies and goes to gay resorts and campgrounds. Two respondents stated they also watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines and go to gay resorts and campgrounds. Two respondents stated they do some of the above. Two respondents stated they watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines, go to gay bars and go to gay resorts and campgrounds. Two respondents stated they do some of the above. One respondent stated she watches gay movies, reads gay books and magazines and goes to gay bars. One respondent stated she watches gay movies, goes to gay bars and goes to gay resorts and campgrounds. One respondent stated she goes to gay bars.

Three respondents stated they have considered/attempted suicide because they felt upset over the break up of a gay relationship. Four respondents stated they have not attempted suicide. Three respondents, the same three who stated they have considered/attempted suicide, stated they have been to individual counseling. Four respondents, the same four who stated they have not attempted suicide, stated they

have not been to individual counseling, couple counseling with same sex partner or marriage counseling with husband. Of the three respondents who went to counseling, two stated their counselor was a straight female. One stated her counselor was straight female and straight male but did not clarify whether this was the same or separate incidences. The same respondent stated she feels counseling was not helpful. The other two respondents stated they feel counseling was very helpful. Four respondents stated they feel they are in good physical, emotional and mental health. One respondent stated she feels she is in good physical and mental health. Two respondents stated they feel they are not in good physical, emotional or mental health.

#### Relationships – Twenty-one through Twenty-nine

One respondent stated that as a child, she experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse and rape. One respondent stated she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse and domestic violence. One respondent stated she experienced emotional and sexual abuse. One respondent stated she experienced emotional abuse and domestic violence. Three respondents stated they did not experience physical, emotional or sexual abuse, incest, rape or domestic violence. None of the respondents stated they experienced incest.

The respondent who stated she experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse and rape as a child, stated she has experienced physical abuse, emotional abuse and domestic violence as an adult with a same sex partner and emotional abuse with an

opposite sex partner. She did not answer the question regarding abuse by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse and domestic violence as a child, stated she has not experienced any abuse as an adult with a same-sex partner. She stated that as an adult she has experienced sexual abuse, attempted rape and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner and attempted rape, domestic violence and crime against her person by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced emotional and sexual abuse as a child, stated that as an adult, she has experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse with a same-sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and sexual abuse by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced emotional abuse and domestic violence as a child, stated that as an adult, she has experienced no abuse with a same-sex or opposite sex partner and emotional abuse by someone who was not a partner.

One of the respondents who stated she did not experience any abuse as a child, stated that as an adult, she has experienced no abuse with a same-sex or opposite sex partner but experienced crime against her person and her property by someone who was not a partner.

The other two respondents who stated they did not experience any abuse as a child, stated that as an adult, they have experienced no abuse with a same-sex or opposite sex partner or by someone who was not a partner.

Two respondents stated that counting the one they are currently in, they have had one relationship. Two respondents stated they have had two to three relationships. Three respondents stated they have had four to six relationships. Three respondents stated they have been in their current relationship under one year. Three respondents stated they have been in their current relationship one to five years. One respondent noted she is currently not in a relationship.

Three respondents stated their relationship is primarily sexual, emotional and affectionate. One respondent, the one who previously stated she is currently not in a relationship, stated her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, affectionate and financial. One respondent stated her relationship is primarily sexual and one respondent stated her relationship is primarily affectionate. One respondent, who previously stated she has been in her current relationship under one year, noted that her relationship is not primarily sexual, emotional, affectionate, financial, spiritual or roommates. Five of the respondents stated their relationship is primarily sexual whether any additional description was given or not.

Four of the respondents stated they are committed to their partner. Two respondents stated they have no partner and one respondent stated no comment. One respondent stated that the soonest she has begun living with someone after meeting them is one week. One respondent stated the soonest she has begun living with someone after meeting them is one month and four respondents stated six months. One respondent stated she has not begun living with someone. The same respondent stated she has had one relationship and she has been in it under one year.

Three respondents stated they consider themselves married. Four respondents stated they do not consider themselves married. One respondent stated she has made a pledge of commitment. She noted this is her first relationship and she has been in it one to five years. Six respondents stated they have not made a pledge of commitment. All seven respondents stated they would marry if they could legally.

One respondent stated the longest relationship she has ever had is under one year. Six respondents stated the longest relationship they have had is one to five years. Four respondents stated they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man. Three respondents stated they have not been involved with a woman who was married to a man. All seven respondents stated they have not been involved with a woman while they themselves were married to a man.

Two respondents stated the longest they have gone between relationships is two to six months and one stated seven to twelve months. Four respondents stated the longest they have gone between relationships is one to five years. Three respondents stated that when their relationships have broken up, their partner usually initiated the break up and one respondent stated she usually initiated the break up. One respondent stated she and her partner usually initiated the break up. One respondent stated she has never had a relationship break up and one stated no comment.

Four respondents stated that when they are in a relationship, they feel accepted by single gay women and gay women in couples. One respondent stated she feels accepted by single gay women. One respondent stated she feels threatened by single gay women and gay women in couples. One respondent did not answer the question. Four respondents stated that when they are single, they feel accepted by gay women in

couples. Two respondents stated they feel gay women in couples see them as a threat. One respondent, the same respondent previously, did not answer the question.

One respondent stated she and her partner play male-female roles. One respondent stated that she and her partner play male-female roles and divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. Three respondents stated that they and their partner do not play male-female roles or divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. One respondent stated she and her partner do not play male-female roles or divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles but noted that she does not have a partner.

Five respondents stated they feel very satisfied with their relationship. Two respondents stated they have no relationship.

One respondent stated she mainly has friends who are gay female and one respondent stated gay male. One respondent stated she mainly has friends who are gay and straight females. One respondent stated straight females and gay and straight males. Three respondents stated they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight and both male and female.

Four respondents stated that the males they are friends with are mainly gay singles, gay couples, straight singles and straight men in heterosexual relationships. One respondent stated the males she is friends with are mainly gay singles, gay couples and straight singles. One respondent stated gay singles and one stated straight singles. Six respondents stated they feel gay men are not offensive and one stated she feels gay men are somewhat offensive. Three respondents stated they discuss sexual issues, experiences and /or feelings with friends who are both gay and straight singles

and couples. One respondent stated she discusses these matters with gay single and couple friends and one stated straight single friends. Two respondents stated they discuss these matters with neither. Two respondents stated they discuss relationship issues with friends who are both gay and straight singles and couples. One respondent, the same as previously, stated she discusses these matters with gay single and couple friends. One respondent stated she discusses these matters with gay couple friends and one stated straight single friends. Two respondents stated they discuss these matters with neither.

#### Religion – Twenty-one through Twenty-nine

Two respondents stated they were raised Catholic and one stated Protestant. Three respondents stated they were raised in a religion that was neither Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic. One respondent stated she was raised in no religion.

Four respondents stated their childhood religion rejected homosexuality. One stated her childhood religion never discussed homosexuality and two stated they had no childhood religion.

Two respondents stated they felt rejected by their religion as a gay teenager. Two stated they had no religion as a teenager. Two respondents stated they didn't yet know they were gay as teenagers and one respondent did not answer the question.

One of the respondents who stated she was raised Catholic stated she considers herself now to be Catholic and the respondent who stated she was raised Protestant stated she considers herself now to be Protestant. Three respondents stated they

consider themselves now to be neither Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic. Two respondents stated they consider themselves now to be of no religion.

Four respondents stated they consider themselves to be both religious and spiritual. One respondent stated she considers herself to be spiritual and two respondents stated they consider themselves to be neither.

Two respondents stated they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood and two respondents stated they do not feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. Three respondents stated they have no religion in adulthood.

Two respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services frequently. One respondent stated she is Catholic and one stated she is Protestant. Two respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services infrequently. Three respondents stated that as an adult, they never attend religious services.

None of the respondents stated that they do not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at their place of worship because they fear accusations. Three respondents stated they have no interest in teaching. The same three respondents stated they attend a gay church. Four respondents stated they do not attend a place of worship.

Five respondents stated they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit. One stated she believes in a Higher Power and one stated she does not believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, Yahweh, Allah or a Higher Power.

Five respondents stated they believe in eternal life. One respondent stated she does not believe in eternal life and one stated she is not sure.

Three respondents stated they believe eternal life is the result of both faith in God and good works. Two respondents stated they believe eternal life is the result of faith in God. One respondent stated she is not sure and one respondent stated she does not believe in eternal life. Four respondents stated they believe it is not a sin to be gay and three stated they are not sure.

Four respondents stated they feel very much loved and blessed by God, two stated they are not sure and one stated she does not believe in God. Four respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are not in conflict. One stated she feels it is in conflict but she is not sure. One respondent stated she is not sure and one stated she does not believe in God.

Three of the four respondents who stated they feel very much loved and blessed by God stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are not in conflict. The fourth respondent stated she feels it is in conflict but she is not sure. One of the two respondents who stated they are not sure if they feel loved and blessed by God stated she believes that believing in God and being gay are not in conflict and the other stated she is not sure. One respondent again stated she does not believe in God.

One respondent stated she completely feels she can turn to her place of worship in time of need and she feels completely accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. Two respondents stated they somewhat feel they can turn to their place of worship in time of need and they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. All three respondents stated they attend a gay church. Four respondents stated they have no place of worship.

### Sexuality – Twenty-one through Twenty-nine

One respondent stated she had her first female-female sexual activity to orgasm when she was under fifteen years old. Five respondents stated they were fifteen to twenty years old and one stated she was twenty-one to twenty-five years old.

One respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is both her partner and her having an orgasm. One respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is both her partner and her having an orgasm and cuddling after sex. Four respondents stated that to them the most important thing about sex is their partner having an orgasm. One of those respondents also stated foreplay. One respondent stated that to her the most important thing about sex is foreplay.

Three respondents stated they generally have sex two to three times per week. Two respondents stated they generally have sex once a week. One respondent stated she generally has sex once a week when in a relationship but noted she is in no relationship at present. One respondent stated she generally has sex once every two to three months.

One respondent stated she considers sex to be the most important part of her relationship. Two stated they consider sex to be a very important part of their relationship. Two respondents stated they consider sex to be not a very important part of their relationship, one stated it to be the least important part of her relationship and one stated no relationship. Five respondents stated they consider their sex life to be very satisfying. One respondent stated she considers her sex life somewhat frustrating and one stated she considers her sex life very frustrating.

Five respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Two respondents stated they have no partner. Two respondents stated that they and their partner always agree on type and frequency of sex. Five respondents stated that they and their partner usually agree on type and frequency of sex. It is noted that two respondents previously stated they have no partner. Four respondents stated that they and their partner both equally initiate sex. One stated that her partner generally initiates sex and two stated no partner.

Six respondents stated that regarding sexual activity, they and their partners perform oral sex. Five of those respondents stated they also perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. Three of those respondents stated that they also use dildos and/or vibrators. One of those respondents stated that she and her partner participate in S&M (Sado Masochism). One respondent stated that she has no partner. Thus, one respondent stated that she and her partner usually perform oral sex, perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex, use dildos and/or vibrators and participate in S&M (Sado Masochism). Two respondents stated that they and their partner perform oral sex, perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex and use dildos/vibrators. Two respondents stated that they and their partner perform oral sex and perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. One respondent stated she has no partner.

Four respondents stated that they and their partner consistently reach orgasm. One stated she consistently reaches orgasm. One stated that her partner consistently reaches orgasm but noted she has no partner. One respondent stated that she has no partner.

Two respondents stated that if they could change one thing about their sexual relationship, it would be more sex. One respondent, who previously stated she has no partner, stated it would be better sex and more creative sex. Four respondents stated they would make no changes.

Three respondents stated they would leave a relationship over sexual infidelity. One stated she would leave a relationship over both sexual infidelity and sexual incompatibility. One stated she would leave a relationship over neither and two stated no comment.

Two respondents stated that they and their partner often show affection in public. Two stated they sometimes show affection in public. One stated sometimes but stated she has no partner. One respondent stated she and her partner never show affection in public and one stated no partner.

Two respondents stated they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who knew they are gay and they also feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they know they are gay. One respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do and do not know she is gay and she also feels comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her when they do and do not know she is gay. One respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do and do not know she is gay and feels comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her when they know she is gay. One respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do and do not know she is gay and does not feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her

when they do or do not know she is gay. One respondent stated she does not feel comfortable in any scenario and one stated NA (presumably not applicable) to all scenarios.

## CHAPTER 15

### AGE THIRTY THROUGH THIRTY-NINE

#### Demographics – Thirty through Thirty-nine

Six surveys, 12.5% of the total, were returned marked in the thirty through thirty-nine year old age group. Four surveys were marked white, one African-American and one other.

One respondent stated she is a high school graduate and has some college. Two respondents stated they have a technical school education, two respondents stated

they have a college degree and one stated she has an advanced college degree. Three respondents stated their employment is in business and three stated their employment is professional.

One respondent, the one who reported being a high school graduate with some college, reported her annual income at under \$20,000 per year. Two respondents reported their annual income at \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year. Two respondents stated their annual income at \$21,000 to \$60,000 per year and one reported \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year.

#### Fear – Thirty through Thirty-nine

Four respondents stated that their being gay does not keep them from working with children and teens and two stated no interest in such work. Two respondents stated they care who knows they are gay. Four respondents stated they do not care who knows they are gay. Four respondents, including the two who stated they care who knows they are gay, stated they wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay. Two respondents stated they do not wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay.

Three respondents stated they are completely out of the closet and three stated they are somewhat out of the closet. Four respondents stated they have come out to all of the important people in their lives and two stated they have come out to most of the important people in their lives. Three respondents stated that peoples' response was mainly acceptance, two stated somewhat acceptance and one stated somewhat rejection. Three of the four respondents who stated they have come out to all of the

important people in their lives stated they feel their response was mainly acceptance. The fourth respondent stated she feels their response was mainly somewhat acceptance. One of the two respondents who stated they have come out to most of the important people in their lives stated she feels their response was somewhat acceptance and one stated somewhat rejection.

Four respondents stated they are willing to be a mentor for a gay teen and two stated they are not sure.

One respondent stated she has been both harassed and the victim of a crime because she is gay. One stated she has been harassed because she is gay. Four respondents stated that they have been neither harassed nor the victim of a crime because they are gay.

Three respondents stated they feel that most people who know them think they are gay and three stated they do not feel that most people who know them think they are gay. Four respondents stated they are not afraid of people knowing they are gay. One of those respondents also stated she is afraid of clients and customers knowing she is gay. One respondent stated she is afraid of co-workers knowing she is gay. One respondent stated she is afraid of family and co-workers knowing she is gay.

One respondent stated she tries somewhat to remain invisible because she is gay. Two respondents stated they try not much to remain invisible because they are gay and three stated they do not try at all. Four respondents stated they feel that most people accept them. Two respondents stated that they have not thought about it.

Two respondents stated that if people knew they are gay, they fear they might be harassed. One respondent stated she fears she might lose her job and have to move from her home. Three respondents stated they have no fear.

Four respondents stated they feel that there is support for their relationship by family and friends. One of three respondents stated she also feels support by co-workers and one stated she also feels support by neighbors. Two of those respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship only by family and friends. One respondent stated she feels that there is support for her relationship by friends and one stated by friends and co-workers. Four respondents stated they feel that there is support for their relationship by family. All six respondents stated they feel that there is support for their relationship by friends.

Three respondents stated that overall, they feel that their community accepts them. Two respondents stated they feel their community does not understand them. One respondent stated none of the above to the possible choices of accepts me, rejects me, fears me, does not understand me.

Two respondents stated they are somewhat afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. Two respondents stated they are not much afraid and two stated they are not at all afraid.

Five respondents stated that they and their partner openly share the same bedroom. One respondent stated that she and her partner do not live together.

Identity – Thirty through Thirty-nine

Three respondents stated they realized they are gay when they were under eighteen years of age. Two stated they realized they are gay between eighteen to twenty-nine years of age and one stated thirty to forty-four years of age. All six respondents stated they feel they are living the life they were born to live.

Three respondents stated they were considered a tomboy while growing up and three stated they were not. Two respondents stated they consider themselves butch, three respondents stated they consider themselves femme and one respondent stated she considers herself neither. Five respondents stated they consider their partner butch. One of those respondents also stated she considers her partner femme. Two respondents stated they consider themselves and their partner butch. Three respondents stated they consider themselves femme and their partner butch. One of those respondents also stated she considers her partner butch. One respondent, the same who previously said she considers herself neither butch nor femme also stated she considers her partner neither butch nor femme.

All six respondents stated they are glad they are gay and all six stated they would not rather be straight. Four respondents stated they feel they were created to be homosexual, one stated she feels she chose to be homosexual and one stated she is not sure. One respondent stated she feels confused because she is gay. Five respondents stated they do not feel guilty, confused or ashamed because they are gay.

Three respondents stated they have gay relatives. One stated she has paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives, one stated maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives and one stated both paternal and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. Two respondents stated they do not have gay relatives and one stated she is not sure.

Three respondents stated they suspect they have gay relatives. Two of those respondents are the same two who previously stated they have paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. The third respondent stated she suspects she has maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. The same respondent previously stated she did not have gay relatives. Three respondents stated they do not suspect they have gay relatives.

Three respondents stated they watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines, go to gay bars and go to gay resorts and campgrounds. Two respondents watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines and go to gay bars. One respondent watches gay movies, goes to gay bars and goes to gay resorts and campgrounds. All of the respondents watch gay movies and go to gay bars. Five respondents read gay books and magazines. Four of the respondents go to gay resorts and campgrounds.

Two respondents stated they have considered/attempted suicide in their lives because they felt rejected by their religion and by their family and/or friends. One of the two respondents stated she considered/attempted suicide because she also felt fear of rejection by family and upset over the breakup of a gay relationship. Four respondents stated they have not considered/attempted suicide.

Two respondents stated they have been to individual counseling and couple counseling with a same sex partner. Two respondents stated they have been to individual counseling. One respondent stated she has been to marriage counseling with ex-husband. One respondent stated she has not been to any individual or couple counseling with same sex partner or marriage counseling.

One of the two respondents who stated they have been to individual counseling and couple counseling with same sex partner stated her counselor was a straight female and that counseling was somewhat helpful. The other respondent stated she is not sure if her counselor was straight or gay and that counseling was somewhat helpful.

One of the respondents who stated she had been to individual counseling stated that it was somewhat helpful. The other respondent stated she is not sure if her counselor was straight or gay and that counseling was not helpful. The respondent who stated she had been to marriage counseling with ex-husband stated she was not sure if her counselor was straight or gay and that counseling was somewhat helpful. One respondent stated she has not been to any individual, couple counseling with same sex partner or marriage counseling. Two respondents stated that their counselor was a straight female. Three respondents stated they are not sure if their counselor was straight or gay. One respondent stated she has not been to counseling. Four of the five respondents who have been to counseling feel it was somewhat helpful and one feels it was not helpful. Five respondents feel they are in good physical, emotional and mental health. One respondent feels she is in good physical health.

#### Relationship – Thirty through Thirty-nine

One respondent stated that as a child, she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse, incest and domestic violence. One respondent stated that as a child, she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse and domestic violence and one

stated she experienced emotional abuse and domestic violence. Three respondents stated they experienced no abuse as a child.

One respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence with a same sex partner. One respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced sexual abuse with a same sex partner. Four respondents stated that as an adult, they have not experienced abuse with a same sex partner.

One respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner. One stated that as an adult, she has experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner. Four respondents stated that as an adult they have not experienced abuse with an opposite sex partner.

One respondent stated she has not experienced abuse as a child or as an adult with either a same sex or opposite sex partner. One respondent stated she has not experienced abuse as a child or as an adult with a same sex partner but she has experienced abuse as an adult with an opposite sex partner in the form of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and domestic violence. One respondent stated she has not experienced abuse as a child or as an adult with an opposite sex partner but she has experienced abuse as an adult with a same sex partner in the form of sexual abuse. One respondent stated she experienced physical, emotional, sexual abuse and domestic violence as a child and has not experienced abuse as an adult with either a same sex or opposite sex partner. One respondent stated she experienced emotional abuse and domestic violence as a child and physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence

as an adult with a same sex partner and no abuse as an adult with an opposite sex partner. The respondent who reported the most abuse as a child, also reported the most abuse as an adult. The respondent stated that as a child, she experienced physical, emotional, sexual abuse, incest and domestic violence. She stated that as an adult she has experienced no abuse with a same sex partner and physical, emotional and sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner.

Five of the six respondents stated that as an adult, they have experienced abuse by someone who was not a partner. One respondent reported physical and emotional abuse and crime against her person and her property. One respondent reported physical abuse and crime against her person and her property. One respondent reported emotional abuse and two reported crime against their property. Four of the six respondents who reported abuse by someone who was not a partner, stated it was crime against their property. Two respondents also reported physical abuse, one reported emotional abuse and two reported crime against their person.

One respondent, the one who previously stated she was age thirty to forty-four when she realized she was gay, stated that counting the one she is currently in, she has had one relationship. One respondent stated she has had two to three relationships, two respondents stated they have had four to six relationships, one respondent stated she has had seven to ten relationships and one stated she had had over ten relationships. The latter respondent previously stated she was age eighteen to twenty-nine when she realized she is gay. The respondent who reported seven to ten relationships stated she was under the age of eighteen when she realized she is gay. One of the two respondents who reported having four to six relationships, stated she

was under age eighteen when she realized she is gay and the other stated she was age eighteen to twenty-nine. The respondent who reported having two to three relationships, stated she was under age eighteen when she realized she is gay. The same respondent noted she was age five when she realized she is gay.

Two respondents stated they have been in their current relationship under one year, two stated one to five years, one stated six to ten years and one stated eleven to twenty years. The same respondent stated she has had two to three relationships and she was under age eighteen when she realized she is gay. This same respondent stated she was age five when she realized she is gay. The respondent who stated she has been in her current relationship six to ten years, stated she has had one relationship and was age thirty to forty-four when she realized she is gay. One of the two respondents who stated she has been in her current relationship one to five years, stated she has had over ten relationships and was age eighteen to twenty-nine when she realized she is gay. The other respondent stated she has had four to six relationships and was under age eighteen when she realized she is gay. One of the two respondents who stated she has been in her current relationship under one year, stated she has had seven to ten relationships and was under age eighteen when she realized she is gay. The other respondent stated she has had four to six relationships and was age eighteen to twenty-nine when she realized she is gay.

Three respondents stated their relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual and affectionate. One respondent stated her relationship is primarily emotional, one stated primarily spiritual and one stated primarily affectionate. The respondent who stated her relationship is primarily spiritual, stated

she has been in her relationship eleven to twenty years. The respondent who stated she has been in her current relationship six to ten years, stated her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual and affectionate. One of the two respondents who stated she has been in her current relationship one to five years, stated her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual and affectionate and the other stated her relationship is primarily emotional. One of the two respondents who stated she has been in her current relationship under one year, stated her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual and affectionate and the other stated her relationship is primarily affectionate. None of the respondents stated their relationship is primarily roommates.

Five respondents stated they are committed to their partner and one stated no comment. The same respondent stated she has been in her current relationship under one year, has had four to six relationships and was age eighteen to twenty-nine when she realized she is gay.

Two respondents stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is one month, two stated six months, one stated one year, and one stated over one year.

Five respondents stated they consider themselves married. One respondent, the same one who previously stated no comment to being committed to her partner, stated she does not consider herself married. The same respondent also stated her relationship is primarily affectionate, she has been in her current relationship under one year, she has had four to six relationships and was age eighteen to twenty-nine when she realized she is gay.

Three of the five respondents who stated they consider themselves married, stated that they have made a pledge of commitment. Two of the five respondents who stated they consider themselves married, stated they have not made a pledge of commitment. The other respondent stated she has not made a pledge of commitment and is the same respondent who stated no comment to being committed to her partner and that she does not consider herself married. All six respondents stated they would marry if they could legally. Five respondents stated the longest relationship they have ever had is one to five years and one respondent stated eleven to fifteen years.

Three respondents stated they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man and three stated they have not. Two respondents stated they have been involved with a woman while they themselves were married to a man and four stated they have not. One respondent stated she has been involved with a woman in both situations and two respondents stated they have not been involved with a woman in either situation. Two respondents stated they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man but not while they themselves were married to a man. One respondent stated she has not been involved with a woman who she was married to a man but she has been involved with a woman while she herself was married to a man.

Two respondents stated that the longest they have gone between relationships is two to six months, three stated seven to twelve months and one stated one to five years. Five respondents stated that when their relationships have broken up, they usually initiated the breakup and one stated her partner usually initiated the breakup.

All six respondents stated that when in a relationship, they feel accepted by gay women in couples and two respondents stated they also feel accepted by single

gay women. Two respondents stated that when single, they feel gay women in couples see them as a threat and four respondents stated they feel accepted by gay women in couples.

All six respondents stated that they and their partner do not play male-female roles and do not divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. Four respondents stated they feel very satisfied with their relationships and two stated they feel somewhat satisfied.

Three respondents stated they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight, male and female. One respondent stated she mainly has friends who are gay female, one stated gay and straight female and one stated straight female. Three respondents stated that the males they are friends with are primarily both gay and straight, singles and couples. One respondent stated gay singles and couples and straight singles. One respondent stated gay couples and one stated straight men in heterosexual relationships.

Two of the three respondents who stated they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight, male and female, also stated that the males they are friends with are primarily both gay and straight, singles and couples. The third respondent stated that the males she is friends with are mainly gay couples. The respondent who previously stated she mainly has friends who are gay female, stated that the males she is friends with are mainly straight men in heterosexual relationships. The respondent who previously stated she mainly has friends who are gay and straight female, stated that the males she is friends with are both gay singles and couples and straight singles.

The respondent who stated she mainly has friends who are straight female, stated that the males she is friends with are mainly both gay and straight singles and couples.

Two respondents stated they feel that gay men are somewhat offensive. Four respondents stated they feel that gay men are not offensive. One of the two respondents who stated they feel that gay men are somewhat offensive, stated that the males she is friends with are straight men in heterosexual relationships. The other respondent stated that the males she is friends with are mainly gay singles and couples and straight singles.

Three respondents stated they discuss sexual issues, experience and/or feelings with both gay and straight single and couple friends. One respondent stated she discusses these matters with gay single and couple friends and straight single friends. One respondent stated she discusses these matters with gay couple and straight single friends and one stated gay single friends.

Three respondents stated they discuss relationship issues with both gay and straight single and couple friends. The same three respondents previously stated they discuss sexual issues, experience and/or feelings with both gay and straight single and couple friends. The respondent who previously stated she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay single and couple friends and straight single friends, stated she discusses relationship issues with gay single friends. The respondent who previously stated she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay single friends, stated she discusses relationship issues with gay couple friends. The respondent who previously stated she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay couple and straight single friends, stated she

discusses relationship issues with straight single friends. All six respondents stated they discuss both sexual and relationship matters with either gay and/or straight single and/or couple friends. None of the six respondents stated they discuss these matters with neither. One respondent stated she discusses these matters with gay single or couple friends only. Five respondents stated they discuss these matters with both gay and straight friends.

#### Religion – Thirty through Thirty-nine

Two respondents stated they were raised Catholic, one stated Protestant, one noted Baptist, one stated they were not raised Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic and one stated none. Four respondents stated their childhood religion rejected homosexuality. Two of those respondents previously stated they were raised Catholic, one noted Baptist and one stated they were not raised Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic. One respondent who previously stated she was raised Protestant, stated her childhood religion never discussed homosexuality and one stated no childhood religion.

Four respondents stated that as a gay teenager, they felt rejected by their religion and two stated they didn't yet know they were gay. One respondent stated she considers herself now to be Protestant, the same as she was raised. Four respondents stated they consider themselves now to be neither Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist nor Agnostic. One of those respondents, who previously noted she was raised Baptist, stated she considers herself now to be Christian. One

respondent who stated she was raised in no religion, stated she considers herself now to have no religion.

All six respondents stated they consider themselves to be spiritual. Two respondents stated they consider themselves to be both spiritual and religious. One of those respondents previously noted she was raised Baptist and considers herself now to be Christian. The other respondent previously stated she was not raised and does not now consider herself to be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic.

Four respondents stated they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. All four respondents stated they do not now consider themselves to be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic. One of those respondents stated she was raised Baptist and considers herself now to be Protestant. One respondent, who previously stated she was raised and considers herself now to be Protestant, stated she does not feel accepted by the religion of her adulthood. One respondent stated she has no religion in adulthood. The same respondent stated she was raised in no religion.

Four respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services frequently, one stated infrequently and one stated never. Five respondents stated that they do not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at their place of worship because they have no interest in teaching. One respondent stated she does not attend a place of worship.

Four respondents stated they attend a gay church. One of those respondents also stated she attends a church that accepts homosexuality. One of those respondents

also stated she has both attended and graduated from Assembly of God College. One respondent stated she attends a church that does not accept homosexuality. The same respondent previously stated she was raised and considers herself now to be Protestant. One respondent stated that she attends no church.

Four respondents stated they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit. One of those respondents also stated she believes in Yahweh, Allah and a Higher Power. Two respondents stated they believe in a Higher Power. Five respondents stated they believe in eternal life. One of those respondents noted that she believes in reincarnation. One respondent, who previously stated she was raised in no religion and has no religion in adulthood, stated she is not sure about eternal life.

All six respondents stated they believe it is not a sin to be gay. All six respondents stated they feel very much loved and blessed by God. Five respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are not in conflict. One respondent stated she believes it is some of both in conflict and not in conflict.

Three respondents stated they completely feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. Two respondents stated they somewhat feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. One respondent stated she has no place of worship. Three respondents stated they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Two stated they feel somewhat accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. One stated she has no place of worship. Two of the three respondents who stated they completely feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need, stated they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. The third respondent stated she feels somewhat accepted.

One of the two respondents who stated they somewhat feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need, stated she feels somewhat accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. The other respondent stated she feels completely accepted. One respondent stated she has no place of worship.

The three respondents who stated they completely feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need, stated that they attend a gay church. One respondent who stated she somewhat feels she can turn to her place of worship in time of need, stated she attends a gay church. The three respondents who stated they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation, stated that they attend a gay church. One of the respondents who stated she feels somewhat accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation, stated she attends a gay church.

#### Sexuality – Thirty through Thirty-nine

Three respondents stated that they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm when they were under fifteen years old, two stated they were fifteen to twenty years old and one stated she was twenty-one to twenty-five years old.

Three respondents stated that to them, the most important thing about sex is both they and their partner having an orgasm. One of those respondents also stated that foreplay and cuddling after sex was the most important thing. One respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is her partner having an orgasm.

Two respondents stated that to them, the most important thing about sex is cuddling after sex.

Three respondents stated they generally have sex two to three times per week. One respondent stated she generally has sex once a month and also marked two to three times a month. One respondent stated she generally has sex two to three times a month and one respondent stated once every two to three months.

Three respondents stated they consider sex to be a very important part of their relationship. Three respondents stated they consider sex to be not a very important part of their relationship. Two of the three respondents who stated they generally have sex two to three times per week, stated they consider sex to be a very important part of their relationship. The other respondent stated sex is not a very important part of her relationship. The respondent who stated she generally has sex once a month and also marked two to three times a month, stated that she considers sex to be a very important part of her relationship. The respondent who stated she generally has sex two to three times a month and the respondent who stated she generally has sex once every two to three months, stated they consider sex to be not a very important part of their relationship.

Four respondents stated they consider their sex life very satisfying. The same four respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Two respondents stated they consider their sex life somewhat satisfying. The same two respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually compatible.

One respondent stated that she and her partner always agree on type and frequency of sex. Three respondents stated that they and their partner usually agree on type and frequency of sex. Two respondents stated that they and their partner sometimes agree on type and frequency of sex.

Four respondents stated that regarding the initiation of sex, both they and their partner equally initiate sex. One respondent stated that she generally initiates sex and one stated that her partner generally initiates sex.

Five respondents stated that regarding sexual activity, they and their partner usually perform oral sex. One of those respondents indicated that she and her partner exclusively perform oral sex. Five respondents stated that they and their partner perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. One of those respondents indicated that she and her partner exclusively perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. Two of the respondents indicated that they and their partner perform oral sex and hand-clitoris/vagina sex. Two of the respondents stated that they and their partner perform oral sex, hand-clitoris/vagina sex and use dildos and/or vibrators. None of the respondents stated that they and their partner participate in S&M (Sado Masochism).

All six respondents stated that they and their partner consistently reach orgasm. Three respondents stated that if they could change one thing about their sexual relationship, it would be more sex. One respondent stated it would be more creative sex. Two respondents stated that they would make no change.

Four respondents stated they would leave a relationship over sexual infidelity. One respondent stated she would leave a relationship over both sexual infidelity and

sexual incompatibility. One respondent stated she would leave a relationship over neither sexual infidelity nor sexual incompatibility.

All six respondents stated that they and their partner sometimes show affection in public. All six respondents stated they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know and who do not know they are gay. All six respondents also stated that they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they do and do not know they are gay.

## CHAPTER 16

### AGE FORTY THROUGH FORTY-NINE

#### Demographics – Forty through Forty-nine

Eighteen surveys, 37.5% of the total, were returned marked in the forty to forty-nine age group. Seventeen surveys were marked white and one was marked African American.

Seven respondents stated they have a college degree. Six respondents stated their highest educational level to be a technical school education. One of those respondents stated she had a GED and a technical school education. Four respondents stated they are a high school graduate. One of those respondents stated she has some college. One respondent stated she dropped out of school.

Eleven respondents stated their employment is professional, two respondents stated business, three stated blue collar and two stated they have no employment.

Four respondents stated their annual income is under \$20,000.00 per year. Eight respondents stated their annual income to be \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year. Five respondents stated their annual income to be \$41,000 to \$60,000 per year.

#### Fear – Forty through Forty-nine

One respondent stated that her being gay keeps her from working with children and teens either in business, volunteer or church work. Thirteen respondents stated that their being gay does not keep them from working with children and teens either in business, volunteer or church work. Four respondents stated they have no interest in such work.

Eight respondents stated they care who knows they are gay. Ten respondents stated they do not care who knows they are gay. Nine respondents stated they wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay. Eight respondents stated they do not wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay and one stated no comment. The eight respondents who stated they care who knows they are gay also stated they wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay. Eight

of the ten respondents who stated they do not care who knows they are gay also stated they do not wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay. One of the ten respondents who stated they do not care who knows they are gay stated that she wonders if people would accept her if they knew she is gay and one stated no comment.

Seven respondents stated they are completely out of the closet. Seven respondents stated they are somewhat out of the closet. Two respondents stated they are somewhat in the closet and two respondents stated they are completely in the closet.

Ten respondents stated they have come out to all of the important people in their life. Five respondents stated they have come out to most of the important people in their life. Two respondents stated they have come out to some of the important people in their life. One respondent stated she has come out to none of the important people in her life.

Twelve respondents feel people's response was mainly acceptance. Three respondents feel people's response was somewhat acceptance. One respondent feels people's response was somewhat rejection. One respondent feels people's response was no noticeable difference. One respondent, the same one who previously stated she has come out to none of the important people in her life, did not answer the question.

Eight respondents stated they are willing to be a mentor for a gay teen. Four respondents stated they are not willing to be a mentor for a gay teen. Five respondents stated they are not sure and one stated no comment.

Three respondents stated they have been harassed because they are gay. Three respondents stated they have been both harassed and the victim of a crime because they are gay. Twelve respondents stated they have been neither harassed nor the victim of a crime because they are gay.

Seven respondents stated they feel that most people who know them think they are gay. Five respondents stated they feel that most people who know them probably think they are gay. Five respondents stated they feel that most people who know them probably do not think they are gay and one respondent stated she is not sure.

Nine respondents stated they are not afraid of family, friends, co-workers or clients/customers knowing they are gay. Three respondents stated they are afraid of family, friends, co-workers and clients/customers knowing they are gay. Three respondents stated they are afraid of co-workers knowing they are gay. One respondent stated she is afraid of family and co-workers knowing she is gay. One respondent stated she is afraid of family and clients/customers knowing she is gay. One respondent stated she is afraid of friends and co-workers knowing she is gay.

Three respondents stated they try to remain invisible as much as possible because they are gay. One respondent stated she tries somewhat to remain invisible because she is gay. One respondent stated she tries not much to remain invisible because she is gay. Thirteen respondents stated they do not try at all to remain invisible because they are gay.

Three respondents stated they would be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted. Four respondents stated they would be somewhat more

involved in their community if they felt more accepted. Eleven respondents stated they would not be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted.

Twelve respondents stated they feel that most people accept them. Two respondents stated they feel that most people do not accept them but they do not fear people. Four respondents stated they have not thought about it.

Two respondents stated that if people knew they are gay, they fear they might be killed, harmed physically, raped, lose their job, have to move from their home and be harassed. One respondent stated she fears she might lose her job, have to move from her home and be harassed. One respondent stated she fears she might lose her job and be harassed. One respondent stated she fears she might lose her job. Four respondents stated they fear they might be harassed. Eight of the respondents stated they feel they might be harassed. Nine respondents stated they have no fear.

Three respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and society. Three respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. One respondent stated she feels there is support for her relationship by family, friends and neighbors. Two respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by family, friends and co-workers. Five respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by family and friends. One of those respondents noted she feels there is support for her relationship by some family and friends. Two respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by friends. Two respondents stated they feel there is no support for their relationship by family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and society.

Fourteen respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by family. Sixteen respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by friends. Seven respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by neighbors. Seven respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by co-workers. Three respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by society.

Eight respondents stated they feel overall that their community accepts them. One of those respondents noted that most (people) don't know (she is gay). Two respondents stated they feel overall that their community rejects them. One respondent stated she feels overall that her community fears her. Six respondents stated they feel overall that their community does not understand them. One respondent stated she feels overall that her community does not accept, reject fear or understand her.

Four respondents stated they are very much afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. Two respondents stated they are somewhat afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. Six respondents stated they are not much afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. Six respondents stated they are not all afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay.

Thirteen respondents stated that they and their partner openly share the same bedroom. Two respondents stated that they and their partner share the same bedroom but make it look like they have separate bedrooms. Three respondents stated they have no partner. One of those respondents stated that she and her partner do not live together and noted they dated for two years.

### Identity – Forty through Forty-nine

Six respondents stated they realized they are gay when they were under eighteen years of age. Six respondents stated they realized they are gay when they were eighteen to twenty-nine years of age. Five respondents stated they realized they are gay when they were thirty to forty-four years of age. One of those respondents noted she came out of denial at forty though her first experience was at seventeen. One respondent stated she realized she is gay when she was forty-five to forty-nine years of age. The reader is reminded that this group of respondents is forty to forty-nine years of age.

Fifteen respondents stated they feel they are living the life they were born to live. Three respondents stated no comment. Twelve respondents stated they were considered a tomboy while growing up. Six respondents stated they were not considered a tomboy while growing up.

Five respondents stated they consider themselves butch, two stated they consider themselves femme, ten stated they consider themselves neither and one stated she considers herself both. Three respondents stated they consider their partner butch, seven stated they consider their partner femme, five stated they consider their partner neither and three stated no partner.

Fourteen respondents stated they are glad they are gay. One of those respondents noted she wishes there were equal rights and more acceptance but is living the life that is right for (her). Two respondents stated they are not glad they are gay and two stated no comment. Three respondents stated they would rather be

straight, fourteen respondents stated they would rather not be straight and one stated no comment. Ten respondents stated they feel they were created to be homosexual, four respondents stated they feel they chose to be homosexual and four stated they are not sure. Two respondents stated they feel guilty, confused and ashamed because they are gay. One respondent stated she feels guilty because she is gay. One respondent stated she feels confused because she is gay and noted that guilty was her original feeling at age seventeen. Fourteen respondents stated they do not feel guilty, confused or ashamed because they are gay.

Eight respondents stated they have gay relatives. One respondent stated she has father and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. One respondent stated she has sister(s) and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. Two respondents stated they have brother gay relatives. One respondent stated she has one brother who is transgender and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. Three respondents stated they have paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. One of those respondents stated they also have maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. One of the respondents stated she has father gay relative, one stated sister(s), two stated brother(s), one stated transgender brother, two stated maternal aunt/uncle/cousin, two stated paternal aunt/uncle/cousin and one stated both maternal and paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. Four respondents stated they have no gay relatives. Six respondents stated they are not sure.

Six respondents stated they suspect they have gay relatives. Two respondents stated they suspect they have gay brothers. One of those respondents also noted that her mom says if the right women had come along before dad she would of (sic) been.

One respondent stated she suspects she has maternal grandparent and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. Two respondents stated they suspect they have maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. One respondent stated she suspects she has paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. The same respondent also noted she is not sure if she has gay relatives. Five respondents stated they do not suspect they have gay relatives. Seven respondents stated they are not sure. One of those respondents also noted she suspects she has paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives as noted above. One respondent did not answer the question.

Six respondents stated they watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines, go to gay bars and go to gay resorts and campgrounds. Two respondents stated they watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines and go to gay bars. One respondent stated she watches gay movies, goes to gay bars and goes to gay resorts and campgrounds. Three respondents stated they watch gay movies and read gay books and magazines. One respondent stated she reads gay books and magazines and goes to gay bars. Two respondents stated they go to gay bars. Two respondents stated they do some of these activities and one stated she does none.

Eleven respondents stated they watch gay movies. Eleven respondents, not always the same, stated they read gay books and magazines. Eleven respondents, again, not always the same, stated they go to gay bars. Six respondents, again, not always the same stated they go to gay resorts and campgrounds. Six respondents stated they do all of these activities. Two respondents stated they do some of these activities but did not designate which and one respondent stated she does none.

One respondent stated she has considered/attempted suicide in her life because she felt ashamed that she is gay and felt fear of rejection by her family and/or friends. One respondent stated she has considered suicide in her life because she felt fear of rejection by her family and friends but has not attempted suicide. One respondent stated she has considered suicide in her life because she felt rejected by her religion but has not attempted suicide. Three respondents stated they have considered/attempted suicide because they felt upset over the break up of a gay relationship. One of those respondents noted she has not attempted suicide. Eleven respondents stated they have not considered/attempted suicide in their life and one respondent did not answer the question. Fourteen respondents stated they have not attempted suicide. Three of those respondents indicated they have considered it. Three respondents stated they have considered suicide. One respondent did not answer the question.

Six respondents stated they have been to individual counseling. Three respondents stated they have been to individual counseling and to couple counseling with same sex partner. One of those respondents stated counseling was not because of being gay but because of being manic depressive. One respondent stated she has been to individual counseling and to marriage counseling with husband. Eight respondents stated they have not been to individual counseling, couple counseling with same sex partner or marriage counseling with husband.

One respondent stated her counselor was gay female, three stated straight female, two stated gay female and straight female, one stated straight male, one stated straight female, straight male and not sure, and two stated not sure.

Five respondents stated they feel counseling was very helpful and five stated somewhat helpful. None of the respondents stated they feel counseling was not helpful.

Three of the five respondents who stated they feel counseling was very helpful, stated their counselor was straight female, one stated gay female and one stated straight female, straight male and not sure.

Two of the five respondents who stated they feel counseling was somewhat helpful, stated their counselor was gay female and straight female, one stated straight male and two stated not sure.

Twelve respondents stated they feel they are in good physical, emotional and mental health, two stated they are in good emotional and mental health, two stated good physical health and two stated they feel they are not in good physical, emotional and mental health.

#### Relationship – Forty through Forty-nine

One respondent stated that as a child she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse, incest, rape and domestic violence. One respondent stated she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse and incest. Three respondents stated they experienced physical and emotional abuse, one respondent stated she experienced emotional and sexual abuse, one respondent stated she experienced emotional abuse and domestic violence, one respondent stated she experienced emotional abuse, one respondent stated she experienced sexual abuse and two respondents stated they experienced rape. Seven respondents stated that as a child,

they did not experience physical, emotional and sexual abuse, incest, rape and domestic violence.

Five of the respondents stated that as a child they experienced physical abuse, eight respondents stated they experienced emotional abuse, four respondents stated they experienced sexual abuse, two respondents stated they experienced incest, three respondents stated they experienced rape and two respondents stated they experienced domestic violence. Eleven of the eighteen respondents stated that as a child, they experienced physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, incest, rape and/or domestic violence.

Twelve respondents stated that as an adult, they have not experienced physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, incest, rape and/or domestic violence with a same sex partner. One respondent stated she has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence with a same sex partner, two respondents stated they have experienced physical and emotional abuse, one respondent stated physical abuse and one respondent stated emotional abuse and one stated emotional abuse and domestic violence.

Eleven respondents stated that as an adult, they have not experienced physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, incest, rape or domestic violence with an opposite sex partner. One respondent stated she has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence, one respondent stated she has experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse, two respondents stated physical and emotional abuse, two stated emotional abuse and one stated rape.

Eight respondents stated that as an adult they have not experienced physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, incest, rape, domestic violence, crime against their person or crime against their property by someone who was not a partner. One respondent stated that she has experienced emotional abuse and crime against her person and her property. One respondent stated she has experienced rape and crime against her property, one respondent stated she has experienced rape, one respondent stated she has experienced emotional and sexual abuse, three respondents stated they have experienced emotional abuse and two stated they have experienced crime against their property.

Three respondents stated that they have not experienced abuse or crime as a child or as an adult with a same or opposite sex partner or by someone who was not a partner. Four respondents who stated they did not experience abuse as a child, stated they experienced abuse and/or crime as an adult. One of those respondents stated she has experienced emotional abuse with a same sex partner, opposite sex partner and someone who was not a partner. One of those respondents stated she has experienced physical abuse with a same sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner. One of those respondents stated she has not experienced abuse by a same sex partner, but has experienced physical and emotional abuse by an opposite sex partner and emotional abuse by someone who was not a partner. One of those respondents stated she has not experienced abuse by a same sex partner, but has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence by an opposite sex partner and emotional abuse by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse, incest, rape and domestic violence as a child, stated she has experienced no abuse or crime as an adult with a same or opposite sex partner or by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse and incest as a child, stated she has experienced emotional abuse and domestic violence with a same sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and rape and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner.

Three respondents stated they experienced physical and emotional abuse as a child. One of those respondents stated she has experienced emotional and sexual abuse with a same sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and emotional and sexual abuse by someone who was not a partner. One of those respondents stated she has experienced no abuse with a same sex partner, emotional abuse with an opposite sex partner and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner. One of those respondents stated she has experienced no abuse with a same sex or opposite sex partner or by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced emotional and sexual abuse as a child, stated she has experienced no abuse or crime as an adult.

The respondent who stated she experienced emotional abuse and domestic violence as a child, stated she has experienced no abuse with a same sex partner, physical and emotional abuse with an opposite sex partner and no abuse or crime by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced emotional abuse as a child, stated she has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence with a same sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and emotional abuse and crime against her person and her property by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced sexual abuse as a child, stated she has experienced no abuse with a same or opposite sex partner and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced sexual abuse as a child, stated she has experienced no abuse with a same or opposite sex partner and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced emotional abuse as a child, stated she has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence with a same sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and emotional abuse and crimes against her person and her property by someone who was not a partner.

The respondent who stated she experienced sexual abuse as a child, stated she has experienced no abuse with a same or opposite sex partner and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner.

One of the two respondents who stated they experienced rape as a child, stated she has experienced no abuse with a same sex partner, rape with an opposite sex partner and rape by someone who was not a partner. The other respondent stated she has experienced physical and emotional abuse with a same sex partner, physical, emotional and sexual abuse with an opposite sex partner and no abuse or crime by someone who was not a partner.

Two respondents stated that counting the one they are currently in, they have had one relationship. Seven respondents stated that counting the one they are currently in, they have had two to three relationships. It is noted that one of those respondents stated she has also had four to six male relationships. Six respondents stated that counting the one they are currently in, they have had four to six relationships. No respondents stated they have had seven to ten relationships. Three respondents stated that counting the one they are currently in, they have had over ten relationships.

Nine respondents stated they have been in their current relationship under one year. One of those respondents stated that her current relationship is with a male, for one month. Two respondents stated that they have been in their current relationship one to five years, four stated six to ten years, and three stated eleven to twenty years.

Two respondents stated their relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, spiritual and affectionate. One respondent stated her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional and affectionate. One respondent stated her relationship is primarily spiritual and affectionate. Two respondents stated their relationship is primarily sexual, seven stated emotional, and four respondents stated affectionate. The respondent who stated she has been in her current relationship with a male for one month, stated her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional and affectionate.

Thirteen respondents stated they are committed to their partner, three stated they are not committed to their partner, one stated no comment and one stated no partner. One of the three respondents who stated they are not committed to their partner stated she has been in her current relationship with a male for one month.

Three respondents stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is one week, four respondents stated one month, six stated six months, two stated one year (including the respondent who previously stated her current relationship is with a male for one month), two stated over one year and one did not answer the question.

Eleven respondents stated they consider themselves married, six respondents do not consider themselves married (including the respondent who previously stated her current relationship is with a male for one month) and one stated no comment.

Two respondents stated they have made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony, thirteen stated they have not made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony and three stated no comment.

Thirteen respondents stated they would marry if they could legally, three stated they would not marry if they could and two stated no comment.

Three respondents stated that the longest relationship they have ever had is under one year, two stated one to five years, eight stated six to ten years, two stated eleven to fifteen years, one stated sixteen to twenty years and one stated over 20 years. The respondent who previously stated her current relationship is with a male for one month, stated the longest relationship she has ever been in is sixteen to twenty years and noted that she was married seventeen years to a male.

Eight respondents stated they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man and ten stated they have not. Two respondents stated they have been involved with a woman while they themselves were married to a man and sixteen stated they have not.

Two respondents stated that the longest they have gone between relationships is one month, three stated two to six months, one stated seven to twelve months, eight stated one to five years, two stated six to ten years, one stated over ten years and one did not answer the question.

Six respondents stated that when their relationships have broken up, they themselves usually initiated the break up, seven stated their partner usually initiated the break up, four stated no comment and one stated she has never had a relationship break up.

Nine respondents stated that when in a relationship, they feel accepted by single gay women and gay women in couples, seven stated they feel accepted by gay women in couples, one stated she feels accepted by single gay women and one did not answer the question. None of the respondents stated that they feel threatened by single gay women or by gay women in couples.

Six respondents stated that when they are single, they feel that gay women in couples see them as a threat, ten respondents stated they feel accepted by gay women in couples, and two did not answer the question.

Four respondents stated they and their partner play male-female roles and divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles, none stated they play male-female roles only, two stated they divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles, ten stated they do neither and two stated no partner including the respondent who previously stated her current relationship is with a male for one month.

Eleven respondents stated they are very satisfied with their relationship, six stated they are somewhat satisfied, including the respondent who previously stated her current relationship is with a male for one month, and one stated no relationship.

Six respondents stated they mainly have friends who are gay and straight females, one stated gay and straight females and straight males, one stated straight females and males and ten stated they mainly have friends who are gay and straight females and males.

Four respondents stated that the males they are friends with are mainly gay singles, two stated gay couples, one stated gay singles and gay couples, one stated straight singles, four stated straight men in heterosexual relationships and six stated both gay and straight, singles and couples.

One respondent stated she feels gay men are offensive, seven stated somewhat offensive including the one who previously stated her current relationship is with a male for one month who noted stereotyped and ten stated not offensive.

Two respondents stated they discuss sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay single friends, one stated gay couple friends, one stated gay single and straight single and couple friends, six stated both gay and straight single and couple friends and eight stated neither.

Two respondents stated they discuss relationship issues with gay single friends, one stated gay couple friends, one stated gay single and couple friends, one stated gay single and straight single and couple friends, one stated straight single friends, seven stated both gay and straight single and couple friends and five stated neither.

### Religion – Forty through Forty-nine

Eight respondents stated they were raised Protestant, five stated Catholic, one noted Baptist, three stated they were not raised Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist or Agnostic and one stated no religion.

One respondent stated her childhood religion accepted homosexuality, eleven stated their childhood religion rejected homosexuality, four stated their childhood religion never discussed homosexuality and two stated no childhood religion.

None of the respondents stated that as a teenager, they felt accepted by their religion, five stated they felt rejected by their religion, eleven stated they didn't yet know they were gay and two stated no religion as a teenager.

Six respondents stated they consider themselves now to be Protestant, two noted Christian, two stated Catholic, five stated none of the above and one of those noted Unitarian, and three stated none.

Three respondents stated they consider themselves to be religious, six stated they consider themselves to be spiritual and nine stated they consider themselves to be both religious and spiritual.

Nine respondents stated they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood, eight stated they do not feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood and one stated no religion.

Eight respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services frequently, eight stated infrequently and two stated never.

One respondent stated she does not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at her place of worship because she fears accusations, fourteen stated they have no place of worship and three stated they do not attend a place of worship.

Ten respondents stated they attend a gay church. One of those respondents stated she attended a gay church for the first time a couple of weeks ago. One respondent stated she attends a church that accepts homosexuality. Three respondents stated they attend a church that does not accept homosexuality. Four respondents stated no church.

Seventeen respondents stated they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit. One respondent stated she believes in a Higher Power.

Sixteen respondents stated they believe in eternal life. Two respondents stated they are not sure.

Five respondents stated they believe that eternal life is the result of faith in God. None of the respondents stated they believe that eternal life is the result of good works. Ten respondents stated they believe that eternal life is the result of both faith in God and good works. Three respondents stated they are not sure.

Two respondents stated they believe it is a sin to be gay but they are forgiven. One respondent stated she believes it is a sin to be gay and she is not forgiven. Fifteen respondents stated they believe it is not a sin to be gay.

Thirteen respondents stated they feel very much loved and blessed by God. Two respondents stated they feel somewhat loved and blessed by God. One respondent stated she feels not much loved and blessed by God. The same respondent

previously stated she believes it is a sin to be gay and she is not forgiven. Two respondents stated they are not sure.

One respondent stated she feels that believing in God and being gay are in conflict. The same respondent stated she believes it is a sin to be gay and she is not forgiven and that she feels not much loved and blessed by God. Twelve respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are not in conflict. Three respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are some of both in conflict and not in conflict. Two respondents stated they are not sure. None of the respondents stated they do not believe in God.

Six respondents stated they completely feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. Three respondents stated they somewhat feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. Three respondents stated they feel not at all that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. Two respondents stated they are not sure. Four respondents stated no place of worship.

Ten respondents stated they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Three respondents stated they feel somewhat accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. One respondent stated she is not sure. Four respondents stated no place of worship.

Six respondents stated they completely feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need and that they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. One respondent stated she somewhat feels that she can turn to her place of worship in time of need and that she feels somewhat accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. Two respondents stated they somewhat feel that

they can turn to their place of worship in time of need and that they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. Three respondents stated they not at all feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. Two of those respondents stated they feel somewhat accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. One of those respondents stated she feels completely accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. Two respondents stated they are not sure if they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. One of those respondents stated she feels completely accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. The other respondent stated she is not sure. Four respondents stated no place of worship.

#### Sexuality – Forty through Forty-nine

Two respondents stated that they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm when they were under fifteen years old. Six respondents stated they were fifteen to twenty years old. Two respondents stated they were twenty-one to twenty-five years old. One respondent stated she was twenty-six to thirty years old. Three respondents stated they were thirty-six to forty years old. Two respondents stated they were forty to forty-nine years old. It is noted that all of the respondents stated they are in the forty to forty-nine years old age group.

One respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is having an orgasm. None of the respondents stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is her partner having an orgasm. Five respondents stated that to them the most important thing about sex is both their partner and them having an orgasm. Two

respondents stated that to them the most important thing about sex is foreplay and five stated cuddling after sex. Two respondents stated that to them the most important thing about sex is both their partner and them having an orgasm, foreplay and cuddling after sex. One respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is her partner having an orgasm, foreplay and cuddling after sex. One respondent stated that to her the most important thing about sex is both her partner and her having an orgasm, foreplay and cuddling after sex. One respondent stated that to her the most important thing about sex is having an orgasm, both her partner and her having an orgasm, foreplay and cuddling after sex.

Two respondents stated they have sex once a week. Seven respondents stated they have sex two to three times per week. Three respondents stated they have sex once a month, two respondents stated two to three times a month, two respondents stated once every two to three months and two stated once every six months or longer.

One respondent stated she considers sex to be the most important part of her relationship. Nine respondents stated they consider sex to be a very important part of their relationship. Six respondents stated they consider sex to be not a very important part of their relationship. Two respondents stated they consider sex to be the least important part of their relationship.

Seven respondents stated they consider their sex life to be very satisfying. Seven respondents stated they consider their sex life somewhat satisfying. Two respondents stated they consider their sex life somewhat frustrating and one respondent stated very frustrating. One respondent stated she considers her sex life

very satisfying with a female and somewhat frustrating with a lot of confusion re: bisexual tendencies.

Ten respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Six respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually compatible. One respondent stated no partner. One respondent stated she feels somewhat sexually compatible with a male and no partner female. The same respondent previously stated a lot of confusion re: bisexual tendencies, that the longest relationship she has ever had is sixteen to twenty years (married seventeen years to a male), and that she has been in her current relationship under one year, (with a male, one month).

Four respondents stated that they and their partner always agree on type and frequency of sex. Eight respondents stated that they and their partner usually agree on type and frequency of sex. Five respondents stated that they and their partner sometimes agree on type and frequency of sex. No respondent stated that they and their partner seldom agree on type and frequency of sex. One respondent stated that she and her partner never agree on type and frequency of sex. The same respondent previously stated no partner.

Three respondents stated that regarding the initiation of sex, they generally initiate sex. Three respondents stated that their partner generally initiates sex. Nine respondents stated that both they and their partner equally initiate sex. Two respondents stated no comment and one stated no partner.

Six respondents stated that regarding sexual activity, they and their partner perform oral sex. Two respondents stated that they and their partner perform hand-

clitoris/vagina sex. Six respondents stated that they and their partner perform oral sex and perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. Two respondents stated that they and their partners perform oral sex, perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex and use dildos and/or vibrators. None of the respondents stated that they and their partners use dildos and/or vibrators exclusively. None of the respondents stated that they and their partners participate in S&M (Sado Masochism). One respondent stated no partner. One respondent did not answer the question.

Ten respondents stated that, regarding orgasm, both they and their partner consistently reach orgasm. One of those respondents previously stated she has been in her current relationship one month with a male. Three respondents stated that they consistently reach orgasm. Three respondents stated that their partner consistently reaches orgasm. One respondent stated no partner and one respondent did not answer the question. It is noted that the same respondent did not answer any of the remaining questions which were all on the same page. Additional questions on the following two pages were all answered leading the researcher to conclude that either the questions were overlooked or deemed offensive and intentionally omitted.

Eight respondents stated that if they could change one thing about their sexual relationship it would be more sex. One of those respondents stated she is currently looking for a female partner. The same respondent previously stated she has been in her current relationship one month with a male. None of the respondents stated they would make a change for less sex. One respondent stated she would make a change for better sex. Three respondents stated they would make a change for more creative sex. One respondent stated she would make a change for more sex, better sex and

more creative sex. Four respondents stated they would make no change. One respondent did not answer the question as previously discussed.

One respondent stated she would leave a relationship over sexual incompatibility. Eight respondents stated they would leave a relationship over sexual infidelity. Five respondents stated they would leave a sexual relationship over both sexual incompatibility and sexual infidelity. Two respondents stated they would leave a relationship over neither sexual incompatibility nor sexual infidelity. One respondent stated no comment and one respondent did not answer the question as previously discussed.

One respondent stated she and her partner seldom show affection in public. Seven respondents stated that they and their partners sometimes show affection in public. Two respondents stated that they and their partners often show affection in public. Seven respondents stated that they and their partners never show affection in public. One of those respondents stated she only shows affection in public with known friends at gay events, church, and dance. One respondent did not answer the question as previously discussed.

One respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know she is gay. One respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do not know she is gay. Nine respondents stated that they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who both know they are gay and who do not know they are gay. Six respondents stated they do not feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who neither know they are

gay nor who do not know they are gay. One respondent did not answer the question as previously discussed.

One respondent stated she feels comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her when they do not know she is gay. Eight respondents stated they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them both when they know they are gay and when they do not know they are gay. Eight respondents stated they do not feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them who neither know they are gay nor who do not know they are gay. One respondent did not answer the questions as previously discussed.

One respondent stated that she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do not know she is gay and that she feels comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her when they do not know she is gay. One respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know she is gay and that she does not feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her who neither know she is gay nor who do not know she is gay. One respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who both know she is gay and who do not know she is gay and that she does not feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her who neither know she is gay nor who do not know she is gay. Eight respondents stated that they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who both know they are gay and who do not know they are gay and that they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them who both know they are gay and who do not know they are gay. Six respondents stated they do not feel comfortable showing affection to

heterosexual women who know they are gay and who do not know they are gay and that they do not feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them who neither know they are gay nor who do not know they are gay. One respondent did not answer the question as previously discussed.

## CHAPTER 17

### AGE FIFTY THROUGH FIFTY-NINE

#### Demographics – Fifty through Fifty-nine

Eleven surveys 22.9% of the total, were returned marked in the fifty to fifty-nine year old age group. All eleven surveys were marked white for race. Four respondents stated they are a high school graduate. Three respondents stated their highest educational level is high school graduate and technical school. One respondent stated her highest educational level is high school graduate and two years

of college. One respondent stated she has a college degree and one stated she has an advanced college degree. One respondent stated she has a GED.

Two respondents stated their employment is blue collar, three stated professional, one stated business, and five stated they have no employment. One of those respondents stated she is retired from the federal government and one stated she is disabled and that her employment had been blue collar.

Four respondents stated that their income is under \$20,000 per year, six stated \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year and one stated \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year. The same respondent previously stated she has a college degree and no employment.

#### Fear – Fifty through Fifty-nine

Seven respondents stated that their being gay does not keep them from working with children and teens, either in business, volunteer or church work. Two respondents stated they have no interest in such work and two stated no comment.

Five respondents stated they care who knows they are gay and six respondents stated they do not care who knows they are gay. Six respondents stated they wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay. Four respondents stated they do not wonder if people would accept them if they knew they are gay and one respondent stated no comment.

Five respondents stated they are completely out of the closet, four respondents stated they are somewhat out of the closet and two respondents stated they are somewhat in the closet.

Seven respondents stated they have come out to all of the important people in their life, two stated they have come out to most of the important people in their life, one respondent stated she has come out to some of the important people in her life and one respondent stated she has come out to none of the important people in her life.

Six respondents stated they feel that people's response was mainly acceptance, one stated somewhat acceptance, one stated somewhat rejection, none stated rejection, two stated no noticeable difference and one respondent did not answer the question. The same respondent previously stated she has come out to none of the important people in her life.

Three respondents stated they are willing to be a mentor for a gay teen, three stated they are not willing, four stated they are not sure and one stated no comment.

One respondent stated she has been harassed because she is gay. None of the respondents stated they have been the victim of a crime because they are gay. Ten respondents stated they have been neither harassed because they are gay nor the victim of a crime because they are gay.

Three respondents stated they feel that most people who know them think they are gay. Three respondents stated they feel that most people who know them probably think they are gay. Two respondents stated they feel that most people who know them do not think they are gay and three respondents stated they are not sure.

One respondent stated she is afraid of family, friends, co-workers and clients/customers knowing she is gay. The same respondent previously stated she is somewhat in the closet, has come out to all of the important people in her life and that she feels their response was no noticeable difference. One respondent stated she is

afraid of family and friends knowing she is gay. The same respondent previously stated that she is somewhat out of the closet, has come out to some of the important people in their life and that she feels their response was mainly acceptance. One respondent stated she is afraid of family and co-workers knowing she is gay. The same respondent previously stated that she is somewhat in the closet, has come out to none of the important people in her life and did not answer the question regarding their response. One respondent stated she is afraid of friends knowing she is gay. The same respondent previously stated she is completely out of the closet, has come out to all of the important people in her life and that she feels their response was mainly acceptance. Seven respondents stated that they are not afraid of family, friends, co-workers and clients/customers knowing they are gay.

None of the respondents stated that they try to remain invisible as much as possible because they are gay. Two respondents stated that they try somewhat to remain invisible because they are gay. Two respondents stated that they try not much to remain invisible because they are gay. Seven respondents stated that they try not at all to remain invisible because they are gay.

Three respondents stated that they would be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted. Two respondents stated that they would be somewhat more involved if they felt more accepted. Six respondents stated that they would not be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted.

None of the respondents stated they feel that most people don't accept them and they fear them. None of the respondents stated they feel that most people don't

accept them but they do not fear them. Nine respondents stated they feel that most people accept them. Two respondents stated that they have not thought about it.

None of the respondents stated that if people knew they are gay, they fear that they might be killed, be harmed physically or be raped. One respondent stated that if people knew she is gay, she fears she might lose her job and also that she might have to move from her home. One respondent stated she fears she might have to move from her home. Three respondents stated they fear they might be harassed. Six respondents stated that they have no fear.

Two respondents stated they feel that there is support for their relationship by family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. One respondent stated she feels that there is support for her relationship by family, friends and co-workers. One respondent stated she feels that there is support for her relationship by family, friends and some by society. Three respondents stated they feel that there is support for their relationship by family and friends. Two respondents stated they feel that there is support for their relationship by family. Two respondents stated they feel that there is no support for their relationship.

Five respondents stated they feel overall that their community accepts them. None of the respondents stated they feel that their community rejects them. None of the respondents stated they feel that their community fears them. Four respondents stated they feel overall that their community does not understand them. Two respondents stated they feel overall that their community neither accepts, rejects, fears nor does not understand them.

None of the respondents stated that they are very much afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. One respondent stated that she feels somewhat afraid of what people would do if they knew she is gay. Five respondents stated that they feel not much afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. Two respondents stated that they are not at all afraid of what people would do if they knew they are gay. Three respondents stated that they have not thought about it.

Four respondents stated that they and their partners openly share the same bedroom. None of the respondents stated that they and their partners share the same bedroom but make it look like they have separate bedrooms. One respondent stated that she and her partner have separate bedrooms but occasionally sleep together and noted that she is disabled. None of the respondents stated that she and her partner do not live together. Six respondents stated that they have no partner.

#### Identity – Fifty through Fifty-nine

Three respondents stated that they realized they are gay when they were under eighteen years of age. Five respondents stated they realized they are gay when they were eighteen to twenty-nine years of age. Three respondents stated they realized they are gay when they were thirty to forty-four years of age.

Nine respondents stated they feel that they are living the life they were born to live. None of the respondents stated they do not feel they are living the life they were born to live. Two respondents stated no comment.

Seven respondents stated that they were considered a tomboy while growing up. Three respondents stated that they were not considered a tomboy while growing up. One respondent stated no comment.

Three respondents stated that they consider themselves butch. All three of those respondents stated that they were considered a tomboy while growing up. Three respondents stated that they consider themselves femme. One of those respondents stated that she was considered a tomboy while growing up. Two of those respondents stated that they were not considered a tomboy while growing up. Five respondents stated that they consider themselves neither butch nor femme. Three of those respondents stated that they were considered a tomboy while growing up. One respondent stated that she was not considered a tomboy while growing up and one stated no comment.

Two respondents stated that they consider their partner butch. One of those respondents stated that she considers herself femme and one respondent stated that she considers herself neither. Two respondents stated that they consider their partner femme. Both respondents stated that they consider themselves butch and that they were considered a tomboy while growing up. One respondent stated she considers her partner neither butch nor femme. The same respondent previously stated she considers herself neither butch nor femme and that she was considered a tomboy while growing up. Six respondents stated no partner.

Eight respondents stated they are glad that they are gay. None of the respondents stated that they are not glad that they are gay. Three respondents stated no comment.

Two respondents stated they would rather be straight. The same two respondents previously stated they are glad that they are gay. Six respondents stated that they would not rather be straight. Three respondents stated no comment.

Five respondents stated they feel that they were created to be homosexual. Three respondents stated they feel that they chose to be homosexual. Three respondents stated that they are not sure.

Three of the five respondents who stated they feel they were created to be homosexual, stated that they are glad that they are gay and that they would not rather be straight. One of the respondents stated she is glad she is gay and that she would rather be straight. One of the respondents stated no comment regarding whether she is glad she is straight and whether she would rather be gay.

Two of the three respondents who stated they feel that they chose to be homosexual, stated that they are glad that they are gay and that they would not rather be straight. The other respondent stated she is glad she is gay and that she would rather be straight.

Two of the three respondents who stated that they are not sure whether they were created to be homosexual or whether they chose to be homosexual, stated no comment to whether they are glad to be gay and to whether they would rather be straight. The third respondent stated that she is glad she is gay and that she would not rather be straight.

One respondent stated that she feels guilty because she is gay. The same respondent previously stated she is not sure if she was created to be homosexual or if

she chose to be homosexual and she also stated that she is glad she is gay and that she would not rather be straight.

One respondent stated she feels confused because she is gay. The same respondent stated she feels she was created to be gay, that she is glad that she is gay and that she would rather be straight.

One of the respondents stated that she feels guilty, confused and ashamed because she is gay. The same respondent previously stated she feels that she chose to be gay, is glad that she is gay and that she would rather be straight.

Eight respondents stated that they do not feel guilty, confused or ashamed because they are gay.

Four respondents stated that they have gay relatives. One respondent stated she has sister(s) gay relatives. One respondent stated she has sister(s) and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. One respondent stated she has a nephew gay relative and one respondent stated she has nieces and nephews gay relatives. The respondent also stated she has no gay relatives. Four respondents stated that they do not have gay relatives. Three respondents stated that they are not sure if they have gay relatives.

Three respondents stated that they suspect they have gay relatives. One respondent stated that she suspects that her mother is gay. One respondent stated that she suspects that she has brother(s), sister(s) and maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. One respondent stated that she suspects that she has maternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. One respondent stated that she does not suspect she has gay relatives. Four respondents stated that they are not sure if they have gay

relatives. One respondent stated that she has no gay relatives and also stated that she is not sure. Two respondents did not answer the question.

Two respondents stated that they watch gay movies, read gay books and magazines, go to gay bars and go to gay resorts and campgrounds. One respondent stated she watches gay movies, reads gay books and magazines and goes to gay resorts and campgrounds. One respondent stated she goes to gay bars. Six respondents stated that they do some of these activities. One respondent stated that she does none of these activities.

One respondent stated that she has considered/attempted suicide in her life because she felt rejected by her family and/or friends. Two respondents stated they have considered/attempted suicide in their life because they felt upset over the breakup of a gay relationship. Eight respondents stated that they have not attempted suicide in their life.

Five respondents stated that they have been to individual counseling. One respondent stated that she has been to couple counseling with same sex partner. One respondent stated she has been to individual counseling, couple counseling with same sex partner and marriage counseling with husband. Four respondents stated that they have not been to individual counseling, couple counseling with same sex partner or marriage counseling with husband.

Three respondents stated that their counselor was gay female. Four respondents stated that their counselor was straight female. Four respondents stated no counseling.

Three respondents stated they feel that counseling was very helpful. One of those respondents stated that her counselor was gay female. Two of those respondents stated that their counselor was straight female.

Four respondents stated they feel that counseling was somewhat helpful. Two of those respondents stated that their counselor was gay female and two respondents stated that their counselor was straight female. Again, four respondents stated no counseling.

Five respondents stated they feel that they are in good physical, emotional and mental health. Two respondents stated they feel that they are in good emotional and mental health. One respondent stated she feels that she is in good physical health. One respondent stated she feels that she is in good emotional health. One respondent stated she feels that she is not in good physical, emotional or mental health. One respondent did not answer the question.

#### Relationships – Fifty through Fifty-nine

One respondent stated that as a child, she experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse, incest, rape and domestic violence. The same respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced emotional abuse with a same sex partner, physical abuse and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner and emotional abuse and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner.

One respondent stated that as a child, she experienced physical and sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence. The same respondent stated that as an adult she has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence with a same sex

partner, emotional and sexual abuse and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner and physical and emotional abuse and crime against her person and property by someone who was not a partner.

Two respondents stated that as a child they experienced physical and emotional abuse. One of those respondents stated that as an adult, she has experienced no abuse with a same sex partner, physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner and crime against her property by someone who was not a partner. The other respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced emotional abuse with a same sex partner, emotional and sexual abuse with an opposite sex partner and no abuse or crime by someone who was not a partner.

Two respondents stated that as a child, they experienced emotional abuse. One of those respondents stated that as an adult, she has experienced emotional abuse with a same sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and no abuse or crime by someone who was not a partner. The other respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced no abuse or crime with a same or opposite sex partner or by someone who was not a partner.

One respondent stated that as a child she experienced sexual abuse. The same respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced physical and emotional abuse with a same sex partner, no abuse with an opposite sex partner and no abuse or crime by someone who was not a partner.

One respondent stated that as a child she experienced no abuse. The same respondent stated that as an adult, she has experienced physical and emotional abuse

with a same sex partner, emotional abuse with an opposite sex partner and no abuse or crime by someone who was not a partner.

Three respondents stated that as adults they have experienced no abuse with a same or opposite sex partner and no abuse or crime by someone who was not a partner.

None of the respondents stated that counting the one they are in, they have had one relationship. Three respondents stated that counting the one they are in, they have had two to three relationships. Seven respondents stated that counting the one they are in, they have had four to six relationships. One of those respondents stated she has had four gay and five straight relationships. One respondent stated that counting the one she is in, she has had over ten relationships. The respondents checked the most categories of abuse as a child and as an adult in the previous questions.

None of the respondents stated that they have been in their current relationship under one year. Three respondents stated that they have been in their current relationship one to five years and four stated six to ten years. None of the respondents stated that they have been in their current relationship over ten years. Four respondents did not answer the question.

One respondent stated that her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual and affectionate. One respondent stated that her current relationship is emotional, financial, affectionate and roommates. One respondent stated that her current relationship is primarily emotional, spiritual and affectionate. One respondent stated that her current relationship is primarily sexual, two stated emotional and two stated affectionate. Three respondents did not answer the question.

Five respondents stated that they are committed to their partner. Nine respondents stated that they are not committed to their partner and none stated no comment. Six respondents stated no partners.

Two respondents stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is one week. One of those respondents noted this relationship, longer in others. The same respondent previously stated that she has been in her current relationship one to five years. The other respondent did not answer the question regarding length of current relationship.

Six respondents stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is one month. Three of those respondents stated that they have been in their current relationship six to ten years, one stated one to five years and two did not answer the question regarding length of relationship.

Three respondents stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is six months. One of those respondents stated she has been in her current relationship one to five years, one stated six to ten years and one did not answer the question.

None respondents stated that the soonest they have begun living with someone after meeting them is over six months.

Five respondents stated that they consider themselves married. Four respondents stated that they do not consider themselves married. One respondent stated no comment and one did not answer the question.

Two respondents stated that they have made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony. One of those respondents noted she had a holy union almost two

years ago. The same respondent previously stated that the soonest she has begun living with someone after meeting them is one week and noted this relationship, longer in others. The same respondent previously stated that she has been in her current relationship one to five years, that her relationship is primarily emotional, spiritual and affectionate and that she is committed to her partner. The other respondent stated that the soonest she has begun living with someone after meeting them is one month, that she has been in her current relationship six to ten years, that her relationship is primarily sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual and affectionate.

Eight respondents stated that they have not made a pledge of commitment and one did not answer the question.

Four respondents stated that they would marry if they could legally, four stated that they would not marry if they could legally, one stated no comment and one did not answer the question.

None respondents stated that the longest relationship they have ever had is under one year. Three respondents stated that the longest relationship they have ever had is one to five years, two respondents stated six to ten years, three stated eleven to fifteen years, one stated sixteen to twenty years, one stated over twenty years and one stated over thirty years.

Six respondents stated that they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man, four respondents stated that they have not been involved with a woman who was married to a man and one respondent stated no comment.

Five respondents stated that they have been involved with a woman while they themselves were married to a man, five stated that they have not been involved with a woman while they themselves were married to a man and one stated no comment.

Four respondents stated that they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man and while they themselves were married to a man. Two respondents stated that they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man but have not been involved with a woman while they themselves were married to a man. One respondent stated that she has not been involved with a woman who was married to a man but that she has been involved with a woman while she herself was married to a man. Three respondents stated that they have not been involved with a woman while either of them were married to a man and one stated no comment to both scenarios.

Two respondents stated that the longest they have gone between relationships is one month, one stated two to six months, two stated seven to twelve months, three stated one to five years, and three stated six to ten years.

Five respondents stated that when their relationships have broken up, they usually initiated the break up, three respondents stated that their partners usually initiated the break up, one stated that both she and her partners usually initiated the break up, one stated no comment and one did not answer the question.

One respondent stated that when in a relationship, she feels threatened by single gay women and accepted by both single gay women and gay women in couples. The same respondent stated that when single, she feels accepted by gay women in couples.

Six respondents stated that when in a relationship, they feel accepted by both single gay women and gay women in couples. Two of those respondents stated that when single, they feel that gay women in couples see them as a threat. Four of those respondents stated that when single, they feel that gay women in couples accept them. Two respondents stated that when in a relationship, they feel accepted by gay women in couples. Both respondents stated that when single, they feel that gay women in couples accept them. One respondent stated that when in a relationship, she feels accepted by single gay women and that when single, she feels that gay women in couples accept her. One respondent did not answer the question.

One respondent stated that she and her partner play male-female roles. Two respondents stated that she and her partner play male-female roles and divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. Three respondents stated that they and their partner neither play male-female roles nor divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles. Five respondents stated no partner.

Six respondents stated that they mainly have friends who are both gay and straight male and female. One respondent stated that she mainly has friends who are gay and straight female and gay male. Two respondents stated that they mainly have friends who are gay and straight female, one stated gay female and one did not answer the question.

Seven respondents stated that the males they are friends with are mainly gay singles and couples, straight singles and straight men in heterosexual couples. One respondent stated that the males she is friends with are mainly gay singles, one stated gay couples, one stated none really and one did not answer the question.

Nine of the respondents stated that they feel that gay men are offensive, three stated they feel that gay men are somewhat offensive, seven stated they feel that gay men are not offensive and one did not answer the question.

One respondent stated that she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay single friends and that she also discusses relationship issues with gay single friends. One respondent stated that she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with gay single friends and that she discusses relationship issues with gay couple friends. One respondent stated that she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with neither gay nor straight single nor couple friends and that she discusses relationship issues with gay couple friends. One respondent stated that she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with neither gay nor straight single nor couple friends and that she discusses relationship issues with both gay and straight single and couple friends. Three respondents stated that they discuss sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with both gay and straight single and couple friends and that they discuss relationship issues with both gay and straight single and couple friends. Four respondents stated that they discuss sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with neither gay nor straight single nor couple friends and that they discuss relationship issues with neither gay nor straight single nor couple friends.

Religion – Fifty through Fifty-nine

All eleven respondents stated that they were raised Protestant. One of those respondents also stated that she was raised in no religion.

None of the respondents stated that their childhood religion accepted homosexuality. Five respondents stated that their childhood religion rejected homosexuality. One of those respondents also stated that her childhood religion never discussed homosexuality. Five respondents stated that their childhood religion never discussed homosexuality. One of those respondents stated no childhood religion. One respondent stated no childhood religion.

One respondent stated that as a gay teenager, she felt rejected by her religion. Ten respondents stated that they didn't yet know they were gay. One of those respondents also stated no religion as a teenager.

Nine respondents stated that they consider themselves now to be Protestant, one stated agnostic and one stated that she considers herself to be neither Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist nor Agnostic.

None of the respondents stated that they consider themselves to be religious. Five respondents stated that they consider themselves to be spiritual. Five respondents stated that they consider themselves to be both religious and spiritual. One respondent stated that she considers herself to be neither religious nor spiritual. The same respondent previously stated that she considers herself to be Agnostic.

Nine respondents stated that they feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. Two respondents stated that they do not feel accepted by the religion of their adulthood. One of those respondents stated no religion.

Six respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services frequently. One of those respondents stated that she used to attend frequently but never since stroke. The respondent is not the same one who previously identified herself as disabled. Two respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services infrequently. Three respondents stated that as an adult, they never attend religious services.

None of the respondents stated that they do not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at their place of worship because they fear accusations. Four respondents stated that they have no interest in teaching. Six respondents stated that they do not attend a place of worship. One respondent did not answer the question.

Five respondents stated that they attend a gay church. One of those respondents also stated that she attends a gay church when she attends. Two respondents stated that they attend a church that accepts homosexuality. Four respondents stated no church.

Nine respondents stated that they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, one respondent stated that she believes in a Higher Power and one respondent stated that she does not believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, Yahweh, Allah or a Higher Power. The same respondent previously stated she is agnostic, considers herself to be neither religious nor spiritual, and that as an adult, never attends religious services.

Eight respondents stated that they believe in eternal life, one stated she does not believe in eternal life and two stated they are not sure. The respondent who previously stated she is agnostic, stated she believes in eternal life. The respondent who stated she does not believe in eternal life and the two respondents who stated they

are not sure if they believe in eternal life, all stated that they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit.

Two respondents stated that they believe eternal life is the result of faith in God. None of the respondents stated they believe eternal life is the result of good works. Six respondents stated that they believe eternal life is the result of both faith in God and good works. One respondent stated that she believes eternal life is the result of neither faith in God nor good works. The same respondent previously stated she is agnostic. One respondent stated that she is not sure and one respondent stated that she does not believe in eternal life. The same respondent previously stated that she was not sure if she believes in eternal life.

One respondent stated that she believes it is a sin to be gay but she is forgiven. None of the respondents stated they believe it is a sin to be gay and they are not forgiven. Eight respondents stated that they believe that it is not a sin to be gay. Two respondents stated that they are not sure.

Seven respondents stated they feel very much loved and blessed by God, three stated they feel somewhat loved and blessed by God and one stated she does not believe in God. The same respondent previously stated that she is agnostic.

One respondent stated she feels that believing in God and being gay are in conflict. Six respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are not in conflict. Three respondents stated they feel that believing in God and being gay are some of both in conflict and not in conflict. One respondent stated that she does not believe in God. The same respondent previously stated that she is agnostic.

Two respondents stated they completely feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. Five respondents stated they somewhat feel that they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. One respondent stated that she is not sure if she can turn to her place of worship in time of need. Three respondents stated that they have no place of worship.

Three respondents stated they feel completely accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. One of those respondents stated she feels that she can completely turn to her place of worship in time of need. Two of those respondents stated they feel that they can somewhat turn to their place of worship in time of need. Three respondents stated they feel somewhat accepted by their fellow worshippers/congregation. All three respondents stated they somewhat feel they can turn to their place of worship in time of need. One respondent stated that she is not sure if she feels accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. The same respondent previously stated that she is not sure if she can turn to her place of worship in time of need. One respondent stated she feels not at all accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. The same respondent previously stated no place of worship. Three respondents stated no place of worship regarding whether they feel accepted by their place of worship. One of those respondents stated she completely feels she can turn to her place of worship in time of need. Two of those respondents stated no place of worship regarding whether they feel they can turn to their place of worship in time of need.

### Sexuality – Fifty through Fifty-nine

None of the respondents stated that they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm under fifteen years old. One respondent stated she was fifteen to twenty years old, four respondents stated they were twenty-one to twenty-five years old, two stated they were twenty-six to thirty years old, two stated they were thirty-one to thirty-five years old, one stated she was thirty-six to forty years old and one stated she was forty to forty-nine years old. It is noted that the group's age range is fifty to fifty-nine years old.

One respondent stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is having an orgasm. Three respondents stated that to them, the most important thing about sex is their partner having an orgasm. Two respondents stated that to them the most important thing about sex is both their partner and them having an orgasm. Two respondents stated that to them the most important thing about sex is foreplay and one stated cuddling after sex. One respondent stated that to her the most important thing about sex is her partner having an orgasm and cuddling after sex and one respondent stated foreplay and cuddling after sex.

One respondent stated that she generally has sex once a week. The same respondent stated that she has been in her current relationship six to ten years and that her relationship is primarily affectionate. Two respondents stated that they generally have sex two to three times per week, one respondent stated once a month, one respondent stated two to three times a month, four respondents stated once every two to three months, one respondent stated once every six months or longer and one respondent stated that she generally has sex two to three times a week before stroke

and once every twelve months or longer after stroke. The same respondent stated that she has been in her current relationship one to five years and that her relationship is primarily emotional, spiritual and affectionate.

None of the respondents stated that they consider sex to be the most important part of their relationship. Three respondents stated that they consider sex to be a very important part of their relationship. Four respondents stated that they consider sex to be not a very important part of their relationship. One of those respondents also stated that she considers sex to be the least important part of her relationship. One respondent stated that she considers sex to be the least important part of her relationship. Three respondents stated no relationship.

Four respondents stated that they consider their sex life very satisfying. Three respondents stated that they consider their sex life somewhat satisfying. Three respondents stated that they consider their sex life somewhat frustrating. One respondent stated that she considers her sex life to be very frustrating.

Two respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very sexually compatible. Two respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are somewhat sexually compatible. One respondent stated she feels that she and her partner are somewhat sexually incompatible. None of the respondents stated they feel that they and their partner are very sexually incompatible. Six respondents stated no partner. It is noted that this number differs from that previously given.

Two respondents stated they and their partner always agree on type and frequency of sex. Three respondents stated they and their partner usually agree on type and frequency of sex. Two respondents stated they and their partner sometimes

agree on type and frequency of sex. None of the respondents stated they and their partner seldom agree on type and frequency of sex. One respondent stated that she and her partner never agree on type and frequency of sex. The same respondent previously stated that she generally had sex two to three times per week before stroke and once every twelve months or longer after stroke that she considers sex to be a not very important part of her relationship and that she considers her sex life somewhat frustrating. Three respondents did not answer the question.

Regarding the initiation of sex, two respondents stated that they generally initiate sex, one stated that her partner generally initiates sex, four stated that they and their partners both equally initiate sex, none stated no comment and four stated no partner.

Regarding sexual activity, one respondent stated that she and her partner usually perform oral sex, perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex and use dildos and vibrators. Four respondents stated they and their partner usually perform oral sex and perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. Two respondents stated they and their partner generally perform oral sex. One respondent stated that she and her partner generally perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex. One respondent stated she and her partner generally perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex and use dildos and/or vibrators. None of the respondents stated that they participate in S&M (Sado Masochism). Two respondents did not answer the question.

Regarding orgasm, one respondent stated that she consistently reaches orgasm. None of the respondents stated that their partner consistently reaches orgasm. Six respondents stated that both they and their partner consistently reach orgasm. None of

the respondents stated that neither they nor their partner consistently reach orgasm. Four respondents stated no partner. It is noted that this figure differs from previous statements.

Four respondents stated that if they could change one thing about their sexual relationship, it would be more sex. One respondent stated less sex and better sex, two respondents stated more creative sex, two respondents stated no changes and two respondents did not answer the question.

None of the respondents stated they would leave a relationship over sexual incompatibility. Five respondents stated that they would leave a relationship over sexual infidelity. Three respondents stated that they would leave a relationship over both sexual incompatibility and sexual infidelity. Two respondents stated that they would leave a relationship over neither and one stated no comment.

None of the respondents stated they and their partner seldom show affection in public, two stated sometimes, one stated often, two stated never, one stated no comment and five stated no partner.

Five respondents stated they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who both know they are gay and who do not know they are gay. Six respondents stated that they do not feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know they are gay or who do not know they are gay.

Three respondents stated they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them both when they know they are gay and when they do not know they are gay. Eight respondents stated they do not feel comfortable when heterosexual

women show affection to them both when they know they are gay and when they do not know they are gay.

Three respondents stated they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do and who do not know they are gay and that they feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they do and do not know they are gay. Six respondents stated they do not feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do and who do not know they are gay and that they do not feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they do and do not know they are gay. Two respondents stated they feel comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who do and who do not know they are gay and that they do not feel comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to them when they do and do not know they are gay.

## CHAPTER 18

### AGE OVER SIXTY

#### Demographics – Over Sixty

Two surveys, 4.1% of the total, were returned marked in the sixty to sixty-nine age group and one survey, 2.0% of the total, was returned marked in the seventy or over age group. For convenience and to facilitate comparison, these surveys were coalesced into one category, age sixty and over, representing 6.3% of the total.

Two surveys were marked white for race and one was marked Hispanic. Both of the sixty to sixty-nine year olds had a college degree and the respondent age seventy or over was a high school graduate. Both of the younger respondents noted their employment as professional, one with an annual income of \$20,000 – \$40,000 per year and the other with an annual income of \$60,000 – \$80,000 per year. The older respondent noted she was retired with an annual income under \$20,000 per year.

#### Fear – Over Sixty

In the questions designed to measure fear of discovery and reprisals, the respondents provided the following information. All three respondents felt that their being gay did not keep them from working with children and teens either in business, volunteer or church work. All three respondents stated they care who knows they are gay. One of the younger respondents stated she wonders if people would accept her if they knew she is gay and one stated she does not wonder if people would accept her if they knew she is gay. The older respondent noted that she wonders if some people would accept her if they knew she is gay. One of the younger respondents stated she

is somewhat in the closet. The other two respondents stated they are somewhat out of the closet. The two younger respondents stated they have come out to most of the important people in their life while the older respondent stated she has come out to some of them. One of the younger respondents feels people's response was mainly somewhat acceptance. The two other respondents feel people's response was mainly acceptance. The younger respondents stated they are not willing to be a mentor for a gay teen whereas the older respondent indicated that she is willing to be a mentor for a gay teen. All three respondents stated that they have neither been harassed because they are gay nor the victim of a crime because they are gay.

The older respondent stated she feels that most people who know her think she is gay. One of the younger respondents stated she does not feel that most people who know her think she is gay while the other respondent stated she is not sure. The older respondent and one of the younger respondents stated that they are afraid of family and friends knowing they are gay while the other respondent stated she is not afraid of family, friends, co-workers or clients/customers knowing she is gay. The same respondent stated she tries somewhat to remain invisible because she is gay while the other younger respondent stated she tries not much to remain invisible because she is gay. The older respondent stated she does not try at all to remain invisible. The older respondent and one of the younger respondents stated they would be more involved in their community if they felt more accepted. The other respondent stated she would not be more involved in her community. The older respondent and one of the younger respondents stated they feel most people accept them. The other respondent stated she feels most people don't accept her but she does not fear them. One of the younger

respondents noted that if people knew she is gay, she fears she might lose her job. She denied fear of being killed, being harmed physically, being raped, having to move from her home or being harassed. The older respondent stated she felt no fear. The other respondent did not answer the question. The older respondent and one of the younger respondents stated they feel there is support for their relationship by family, friends and neighbors but not co-workers or society. The other respondent stated she feels there is support for her relationship by family and friends. The older respondent feels that overall her community accepts her. One of the younger respondents feels that overall her community does not understand her. The other respondent feels that her community does not accept, reject, fear or understand her. One of the younger respondents stated she is somewhat afraid of what people would do if they knew she is gay. One respondent stated that she is not much afraid of what people would do if they knew she is gay. The older respondent stated she has not thought about it.

The older respondent stated that she and her partner openly share the same bedroom. One of the younger respondents stated that she and her partner share the same bedroom but make it look like they have separate bedrooms. The other respondent stated that she and her partner have separate bedrooms which she noted was due to medical reasons but that they occasionally sleep together.

#### Identity – Over Sixty

One of the younger respondents stated that she realized she was gay when she was under eighteen years of age. The other respondent stated that she realized she was gay when she was eighteen to twenty-nine years old. The older respondent stated that

she realized she was gay when she was under eighteen years old. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they feel they are living the life they were born to live. The other respondent stated she feels she is not living the life she was born to live. All three respondents stated they were considered a tomboy while growing up. The older respondent stated she considers herself butch and her partner femme. One of the younger respondents stated she considers herself femme and her partner butch. The other respondent stated she considers herself neither butch nor femme and that she has no partner. All three respondents stated they are glad they are gay and that they would not rather be straight. The older and one of the younger respondents feel they were created to be homosexual while the other respondent is not sure. All three respondents denied feeling guilty, confused or ashamed because they are gay.

The older and one of the younger respondents acknowledge having gay relatives and the other stated she is not sure. The younger respondent stated she has a paternal aunt/uncle/cousin who is gay. The older respondent stated she has a maternal aunt/uncle/cousin who is gay. She also stated she has twin nieces, lineage not specified, one of whom is gay. One of the younger respondents noted that she suspects she has paternal aunt/uncle/cousin gay relatives. The other respondent and the older respondent stated that they are not sure.

The older and one of the younger respondents stated that they go to gay bars, resorts and campgrounds and read gay books and magazines. The younger respondent stated that she also watches gay movies. The other respondent stated that she does none of these activities. The older and one of the younger respondents acknowledged they have considered/attempted suicide in their life. The other respondent stated that

she has not. The younger respondent stated it was because she was upset over the break up of a straight relationship. The older respondent stated it was because she was upset over the break up of a gay relationship. One of the younger respondents stated she has been to individual counseling and marriage counseling with her husband. She stated that her counselor was a straight female and she feels the counseling was somewhat helpful. The other respondent stated she has been to couple counseling with same-sex partner. She stated she was not sure if her counselor was straight or gay and that counseling was somewhat helpful. The older respondent stated she has never been to counseling. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they feel they are in good physical, mental and emotional health. The other respondent stated she feels she is in good physical health.

#### Relationships – Over Sixty

The older respondent stated that as a child, she experienced sexual abuse and rape. She stated that she has not experienced any abuse as an adult with a same sex partner, opposite sex partner or by anyone who was not a partner. Both of the younger respondents stated they did not experience physical, emotional or sexual abuse, incest, rape or domestic violence as a child. They both stated that as an adult, they have experienced emotional abuse with a same sex partner. One stated that as an adult she has experienced physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence with an opposite sex partner and crime against her person and her property by someone who was not a partner. The other respondent stated that she has not experienced any abuse as an adult with an opposite sex partner or by anyone who was not a partner.

One of the younger respondents stated that counting the one she is currently in, she has had two to three relationships and the other respondent stated she has had seven to ten relationships. The older respondent stated she has had four to six relationships. One of the younger respondents stated she has been in her current relationship one to five years and the other respondent stated she has been in her current relationship over twenty years. The older respondent stated she has been in her current relationship six to ten years. One of the younger respondents stated her relationship is primarily emotional and also sexual and affectionate. The respondent who stated she has been in her current relationship six to ten years, stated that her relationship is primarily roommates. The older respondent stated her relationship is primarily spiritual and affectionate and a mark appearing similar to “?” was placed by sexual. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they are committed to their partner. The respondent who stated that her relationship is primarily roommates, stated no comment. All three respondents stated they consider themselves married. Two respondents stated they would marry if they could legally. The respondent who stated that her relationship is primarily roommates and stated no comment regarding commitment, stated that she would not marry if she could legally. The older respondent stated she has made a “pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony”. One of the younger respondents stated she has made a “pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony” but not with her current partner. The other respondent stated she has not made a pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony.

One of the younger respondents stated the soonest she has begun living with someone after meeting them is one month. The other two respondents stated over one

year. One of the younger respondents stated the longest relationship she has ever had is over twenty years and the other stated eleven to fifteen years. The older respondent stated the longest relationship she has ever been in is sixteen to twenty years. One of the younger respondents stated the longest relationship she has ever been in is over twenty years and the other stated eleven to fifteen years. Both of the younger respondents stated that the longest they have gone between relationships is one to five years and the older respondent stated the longest she has gone between relationships is over ten years.

All three respondents stated they have been involved with a woman who was married to a man. One of the younger respondents stated she was involved with a woman while she herself was married to a man. The other respondents stated they have not been involved with a woman while married to a man.

The older and one of the younger respondents stated that when their relationships have broken up, their partner usually initiated the break up. The other respondent stated no comment.

One of the younger respondents stated that when in a relationship, she feels accepted by single gay women and gay women in couples. The other respondent stated that when in a relationship, she feels accepted by gay women in couples. The older respondent did not answer the question. All three respondents stated that when single, they feel accepted by gay women in couples.

Both of the younger respondents stated they and their partner play male-female roles and divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles while the older respondent stated she and her partner do neither. The older and one of the

younger respondents described themselves as very satisfied with their relationships. The respondent who stated that her relationship is primarily roommates, stated she is very unsatisfied with her relationship.

One of the younger respondents stated she mainly has friends who are gay and straight male and female. The other respondent stated she mainly has friends who are gay and straight females. The older respondent stated she mainly has friends who are gay and straight, male and female. The older and one of the younger respondents stated that the males they are friends with are mainly gay singles and gay couples. The other respondent stated that the males she is friends with are mainly straight men in heterosexual couples. All three respondents stated they feel gay men are not offensive.

One of the younger respondents stated she discusses sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings and relationship issues with gay single and gay couple friends. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they discuss sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings and relationship issues with neither.

#### Religion -- Over Sixty

The religion section of the survey garnered the following information. One of the younger respondents stated she was raised Protestant and her childhood religion never discussed homosexuality. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they were raised Catholic and their childhood religion rejected homosexuality. The older, Catholic respondent stated that as a gay teenager, she felt rejected by her religion. Both of the younger respondents stated they did not yet know they were gay

as a teenager. The respondent raised Protestant considers herself now to be Protestant and the two respondents raised Catholic considers themselves now to be Catholic. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they consider themselves to be both religions and spiritual. The other respondent stated she considers herself to be spiritual. One of the younger respondents feels accepted by the religion of her adulthood. The other respondent did not answer the question. The older respondent stated she does not feel accepted by the religion of her adulthood. The older and one of the younger respondents stated that as an adult, they attend religious services frequently. The other respondent stated that she never attends religious services. Both of the younger respondents stated they do not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at their place of worship because they have no interest in teaching. The older respondent stated she does not attend a place of worship. One of the younger respondents stated she attends a gay church. The other respondent stated she attends no church. The older respondent stated she attends a church that accepts homosexuality. All three respondents stated they believe in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they believe in eternal life and the other respondent stated she is not sure. Both of the younger respondents stated they believe eternal life is the result of faith in God. The older respondent stated she believes eternal life is the result of both faith in God and good works. All three respondents stated they believe it is not a sin to be gay. All three respondents stated they feel very much loved and blessed by God and they feel that believing in God and being gay is not in conflict. One of the younger respondents stated she somewhat feels she can turn to her place of worship in time of need and the other respondent

stated she has no place of worship. The older respondent stated she completely feels she can turn to her place of worship in time of need. One of the young respondents stated she feels somewhat accepted by her fellow worshippers/congregation. The other respondent stated no place of worship. The older respondent stated she is not sure.

### Sexuality – Over Sixty

The older and one of the younger respondents stated they were fifteen to twenty years old when they had their first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. The other respondent stated she was twenty-one to twenty-five years old when she had her first female-female sexual activity to orgasm. One of the younger respondents stated that to her, the most important thing about sex is both her partner and her having an orgasm. The other respondent stated that to her the most important thing about sex is both her partner and her having an orgasm and foreplay. The older respondent stated that to her the most important thing about sex is cuddling after sex. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they generally have sex once every two to three months. The other respondent stated she generally has sex once every twelve months or longer. The older and one of the younger respondents stated that sex was not a very important part of their relationship. The respondent who stated she generally has sex once every twelve months or longer, stated that sex is the least important part of her relationship. The older respondent stated that she considers her sex life very satisfying. One of the younger respondents stated she considers her sex life somewhat satisfying. The respondent who stated she generally has sex once every

twelve months or longer and that sex is the least important part of her relationship, stated that her sex life is very frustrating. The older respondent feels that she and her partner are very sexually compatible and always agree on type and frequency of sex. One of the younger respondents feels that she and her partner are somewhat sexually compatible and usually agree on type and frequency of sex. The other respondent did not answer the question regarding sexual compatibility and stated that she and her partner never agree on type and frequency of sex. The older respondent stated she generally initiates sex. One of the younger respondents stated she and her partner both equally initiate sex. The respondent who stated that she and her partner never agree on type and frequency of sex, stated no comment regarding the initiation of sex. The older and one of the younger respondents stated that regarding sexual activity, they and their partner usually perform oral sex and hand-clitoris/vagina sex. The other respondent stated she and her partner usually perform oral sex, hand-clitoris/vagina sex and use dildos and/or vibrators. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they and their partner consistently reach orgasm. The other respondent stated that neither she nor her partner consistently reach orgasm. The same respondent stated that she generally has sex once every twelve months or longer, that sex is the least important part of her relationship, that her sex life is very frustrating and that she and her partner never agree on type and frequency of sex. She did not answer the questions regarding sexual compatibility and the initiation of sex. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they would make no changes in their sexual relationship. The respondent who stated she generally has sex once every twelve months or longer, stated the one thing she would change about her sexual relationship

would be more sex. One of the younger respondents stated she would leave a relationship over sexual infidelity. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they would leave a relationship over sexual incompatibility and sexual infidelity. The older and one of the younger respondents stated they and their partner never show affection in public while the other respondent stated she and her partner sometimes show affection in public.

One of the younger respondents stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know she is gay and who do not know she is gay. She also stated she feels comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her whether they know she is gay or not. The other respondent stated she feels comfortable showing affection to heterosexual women who know she is gay. She also stated she feels comfortable when heterosexual women show affection to her when they know she is gay. The older respondent stated she does not feel comfortable in either scenario.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine five aspects of life concerning gay women which consist of fear, identity, relationships, religion and sexuality. One goal was to present a collective profile of gay women in a small southern town in each decade of life from teens to the end of the life continuum and how they experience these five aspects of life. Another goal was to present a comparison of two age groups, the older and the younger, reflecting pre and post 1970's socialization and its effect on their views and experiences concerning these five aspects of life.

Seventeen questions, number six through twenty-two, were designed to measure the role and sense of fear in the lives of the respondents. Overall, the respondents indicated varying degrees of fear, anxiety or, at least, heightened awareness of other people including family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and society in general and how these people perceive and respond to them. This was particularly the case for the older age group, the product of pre 1970's socialization which viewed homosexuality in more negative terms.

Eighteen questions, number twenty-three through forty, were designed to examine the role and sense of identity in the lives of the respondents. Overall, the respondents indicated varying degrees of identity with and as being gay and its place in and effect on their lives. Again the older respondents indicated more ambivalence in their identity as a gay woman and their identification with homosexuality, which is likely a function of their pre 1970's socialization.

Twenty-six questions, number forty-one through sixty-six, were designed to measure the role and sense of various relationships in the lives of the respondents.

Overall, the respondents indicated various sentiments regarding their various relationships, both with significant and general others. Again, the older respondents indicated more conservative views and experiences regarding their various relationships which is likely the result of their pre 1970's socialization.

Seventeen questions, number sixty-seven through eighty-three, were designed to measure the role and sense of religion in the lives of the respondents. Overall, the respondents indicated various sentiments regarding religion and its place in their lives. The older group indicated more traditional values regarding religion and deem it more important in their lives. This too can be seen as influenced by their pre 1970's socialization.

Fifteen questions, number eighty-four through ninety-eight, were designed to measure the role and sense of sexuality in the lives of the respondents. Overall, the respondents indicated various sentiments regarding sexuality and its place in their lives. The older group again indicated more conservative values and experiences regarding sexuality which again can likely be attributed to their pre 1970's socialization.

As with most research, this study raises more questions than it answers. This study is an overview of a number of areas in the lives of gay women. It is not a definitive statement by any means and merely serves as a starting point for further study in any given area. One question and answer only leads to another and on to many others. Although there is much paucity in many respects, there has been an exponential increase in the literature regarding homosexuality in the past twenty-five years. Much more needs to be done to bring the myriad elements of this topic to light and thus to

enlighten members of society and even gay women themselves. The sexual revolution, the gay liberation movement and the women's movement in the 1960's and 1970's had a collective significant if not profound impact on American society with far-reaching ramifications to the present day and beyond. Pandora is out of the box and will not go gently back into that night.



## **SURVEY REQUEST**

My name is Kate Markley. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a private practice in Lakeland. I am currently working on a PhD in Clinical Sexology at Maimonides University in Miami, Florida. This survey is for my doctoral dissertation.

The survey is for women who identify themselves as gay, or lesbian, who live in the Lakeland area. The survey asks about your views and experiences in several areas. Please select the answer to each question that best describes you. Please do not reveal your identity. Any identifying information will be kept confidential.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. A stamped, addressed return envelope is attached. Please reproduce and distribute the survey to as many other gay women in the Lakeland area as possible. I will be glad to provide stamped, addressed return envelopes or the survey can be mailed to:

Kate Markley, ACSW, LCSW, DCSW  
P. O. 2657  
Lakeland, FL 33806-2657

If you would like to know the results of the survey, please contact me at (863) 701-8881

1. My age is:
  - Under 20
  - 21-29
  - 30-39
  - 40-49
  - 50-59
  - 60-69
  - 70 or over
  
2. My race is:
  - White
  - African American
  - Hispanic
  - Other
  
3. My highest educational level is:
  - GED
  - High School Graduate
  - Technical School
  - College Degree
  - Advanced College Degree
  - Dropped out of School
  
4. My employment is:
  - Blue Collar
  - Professional
  - Business
  - No Employment
  
5. My annual income is:
  - Under \$20,000 per year
  - \$20,000 - \$40,000 per year
  - \$41,000 - \$60,000 per year
  - \$60,000 - \$80,000 per year
  - \$81,000 - \$100,000 per year
  - Over \$100,000 per year
  
6. My being gay, keeps me from working with children and teens either in business, volunteer or church work:
  - Yes
  - No
  - No comment
  - No interest in such work
  
7. I care who knows I am gay:
  - Yes
  - No
  - No comment

8. I wonder if people would accept me if they knew I am gay:  
 Yes  
 No  
 No comment
9. I am:  
 Completely in the closet  
 Somewhat in the closet  
 Somewhat out of the closet  
 Completely out of the closet
10. I have "come out" to the important people in my life:  
 All  
 Most  
 Some  
 None
11. I feel their response was mainly:  
 Acceptance  
 Somewhat acceptance  
 Somewhat rejection  
 Rejection  
 No noticeable difference
12. I am willing to be a mentor for a gay teen:  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not sure  
 No comment
13. I have been:  
 Harassed because I am gay  
 The victim of a crime because I am gay  
 Both  
 Neither
14. I feel that most people who know me think I'm gay:  
 Yes  
 Probably  
 No  
 Not sure
15. I am afraid of people knowing I am gay: (check all that apply)  
 Family  
 Friends  
 Co Workers  
 Clients/customers  
 All of the above  
 Not afraid

16. I try to remain invisible because I am gay:

- As much as possible
- Somewhat
- Not much
- Not at all

17. I would be more involved in my community if I felt more accepted:

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

18. I feel:

- Most people don't accept me and I fear them
- Most people don't accept me but I do not fear them
- Most people accept me
- Have not thought about it

19. If people knew I'm gay, I fear I might: (check all that apply)

- Be killed
- Be harmed physically
- Be raped
- Lose my job
- Have to move from my home
- Be harassed
- No fear

20. I feel there is support for my relationship: (check all that apply)

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Co workers
- Society
- No support

21. I feel overall that my community:

- Accepts me
- Rejects me
- Fears me
- Does not understand me
- None of the above

22. I am afraid of what people would do if they knew I'm gay:

- Very much
- Somewhat
- Not much
- Not at all
- Have not thought about it

23. My partner and I:

- Openly share the same bedroom
- Share the same bedroom but make it look like we have separate bedrooms
- Have separate bedrooms but occasionally sleep together
- Do not live together
- No partner

24. I realized I was gay when I was:

- Under 18
- 18-29
- 30-44
- 45-59
- Over 59

25. I feel I am living the life I was born to live:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

26. I was considered a tomboy while growing up:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

27. I consider myself:

- Butch
- Femme
- Neither

28. I consider my partner:

- Butch
- Femme
- Neither
- No Partner

29. I am glad I am gay:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

30. I would rather be straight:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

31. I feel:

- I was created to be homosexual
- I chose to be homosexual
- Not sure

32. I feel:

- Guilty because I am gay
- Confused because I am gay
- Ashamed because I am gay
- All of the above
- None of the above

33. I have gay relatives: (check all that apply)

- Mother
- Father
- Brother(s)
- Sister(s)
- Maternal Aunt/Uncle/Cousin
- Paternal Aunt/Uncle/Cousin
- Maternal grandparent
- Paternal grandparent
- None
- Not sure

34. I suspect I have gay relatives: (check all that apply)

- Mother
- Father
- Brother(s)
- Sister(s)
- Maternal Aunt/Uncle/Cousin
- Paternal Aunt/Uncle/Cousin
- Maternal grandparent
- Paternal grandparent
- None
- Not sure

35. I: (check all that apply)

- Watch gay movies
- Read gay books, magazines
- Go to gay bars
- Go to gay resorts, campgrounds
- All of the above
- Some of the above
- None of the above

36. I have considered/attempted suicide in my life because I felt: (check all that apply)

- Ashamed that I'm gay
- Rejected by my religion
- Rejected by my family and/or friends
- Fear of rejection by my family and/or friends
- Upset over the break up of a gay relationship
- Upset over the break up of a straight relationship
- Have not attempted suicide

37. I have been to:

- Individual counseling
- Couple counseling with same-sex partner
- Marriage counseling with husband
- All of the above
- None of the above

38. My counselor was:

- Gay female
- Gay male
- Straight female
- Straight male
- Not sure
- No counseling

39. I feel counseling was:

- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not helpful
- No counseling

40. I feel I am in good:

- Physical health
- Emotional health
- Mental health
- All of the above
- None of the above

41. As a child, I experienced:

(check all that apply)

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Incest
- Rape
- Domestic Violence
- None of the above

42. As an adult, I have experienced the following with a same-sex partner: (check all that apply)

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Incest
- Rape
- Domestic Violence
- None of the above

43. As an adult, I have experienced the following with an opposite sex partner: (check all that apply)

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Incest
- Rape
- Domestic Violence
- None of the above

44. As an adult, I have experienced the following by someone who was not a partner: (check all that apply)

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Incest
- Rape
- Domestic Violence
- Crime against my person
- Crime against my property
- None of the above

45. Counting the one I am currently in, I have had:

- 1 relationship
- 2-3 relationships
- 4-6 relationships
- 7-10 relationships
- over 10 relationships

46. I have been in my current relationship:

- Under 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- Over 20 years
- Over 30 years

47. My relationship is primarily:

- Sexual
- Emotional
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Affectionate
- Roommates

48. I am committed to my partner:

- Yes
- No
- No comment
- No partner

49. The soonest I have begun living with someone after meeting them is:

- 1 week
- 1 month
- 6 months
- 1 year
- Over 1 year

50. I consider myself married:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

51. I have made a “pledge of commitment in a formal ceremony”:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

52. I would marry if I could legally:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

53. The longest relationship I have ever had is:

- Under 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- Over 20 years
- Over 30 years

54. I have been involved with a woman while she was married to a man:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

55. I have been involved with a woman while I was married to a man:

- Yes
- No
- No comment

56. The longest I have gone between relationships is:

- 1 month
- 2-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years

57. When my relationships have broken up:
- I usually initiated the break up
  - My partner usually initiated the break up
  - No comment
  - Never had a relationship break up
  - Never had a relationship
58. When in a relationship, I feel:
- Threatened by single gay women
  - Threatened by gay women in couples
  - Accepted by single gay women
  - Accepted by gay women in couples
59. When single, I feel:
- Threatened by gay women in couples
  - Gay women in couples see me as a threat
  - Accepted by gay women in couples
  - Gay women in couples accept me
60. My partner and I:
- Play male-female roles
  - Divide household chores based on traditional male-female roles
  - Both
  - Neither
  - No partner
61. I feel satisfied with my relationship:
- Very satisfied
  - Somewhat satisfied
  - Not very satisfied
  - Very unsatisfied
  - No relationship
62. I mainly have friends who are:
- Gay female
  - Straight female
  - Gay male
  - Straight male
  - Gay and straight females
  - Gay and straight males
  - All of the above
63. The males I am friends with are mainly:
- Gay singles
  - Gay couples
  - Straight singles
  - Straight men in heterosexual couples
  - All of the above

64. I feel gay men are:

- Offensive
- Somewhat offensive
- Not offensive

65. I discuss sexual issues, experiences and/or feelings with:

- Gay single friends
- Gay couple friends
- Straight single friends
- Straight couple friends
- Both
- Neither

66. I discuss relationship issues with:

- Gay single friends
- Gay couple friends
- Straight single friends
- Straight couple friends
- Both
- Neither

67. I was raised:

- Protestant
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Atheist
- Agnostic
- None of the above
- None

68. My childhood religion:

- Accepted homosexuality
- Rejected homosexuality
- Never discussed homosexuality
- No childhood religion

69. As a gay teenager, I felt:

- Accepted by my religion
- Rejected by my religion
- Didn't yet know I was gay
- No religion as a teenager

70. I consider myself now to be:

- Protestant
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Atheist
- Agnostic
- None of the Above
- None

71. I consider myself to be:

- Religious
- Spiritual
- Both
- Neither

72. I feel accepted by the religion of my adulthood:

- Yes
- No
- No religion

73. As an adult, I attend religious services:

- Frequently
- Infrequently
- Never

74. I do not teach classes or volunteer with teens or children at my place of worship because I:

- Fear accusations
- Have no interest in teaching
- Do not attend a place of worship

75. I attend:

- A Gay Church
- A church that accepts homosexuality
- A church that does not accept homosexuality
- No Church

76. I believe in:

- God/Jesus/Holy Spirit
- Yahweh
- Allah
- Higher Power
- None of the above

77. I believe in Eternal Life:

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

78. I believe Eternal Life is the result of:

- Faith in God
- Good Works
- Both
- Neither
- Not sure
- Do not believe in Eternal Life

79. I believe:

- It is a sin to be gay but I am forgiven
- It is a sin to be gay and I am not forgiven
- It is not a sin to be gay
- Not sure

80. I feel Loved and Blessed by God:

- Very much
- Somewhat
- Not much
- Not sure
- Do not believe in God

81. I feel that believing in God and being gay is:

- In conflict
- Not in conflict
- Some of both
- Not sure
- Do not believe in God

82. I feel I can turn to my place of worship in time of need:

- Completely
- Somewhat
- Not at all
- Not sure
- No place to worship

83. I feel accepted by my fellow worshippers/congregation:

- Completely
- Somewhat
- Not at all
- Not sure
- No place to worship

84. When I had my first female – female sexual activity to orgasm, I was:

- Under 15 years old
- 15 – 20 years old
- 21 – 25 years old
- 26 – 30 years old
- 31 – 35 years old
- 36 – 40 years old
- 40 – 49 years old

- Over 50 years old  
 85. To me, the most important thing about sex is:  
 Having an orgasm  
 My partner having an orgasm  
 Both my partner and me having an orgasm  
 Foreplay  
 Cuddling after sex
86. I generally have sex:  
 Once a week  
 2 – 3 times per week  
 Once a month  
 2 – 3 times a month  
 Once every 2 – 3 months  
 Once every 6 months or longer  
 Once every 12 months or longer
87. I consider sex to be:  
 Most important part of my relationship  
 Very important part of my relationship  
 Not very important part of my relationship  
 Least important part of my relationship  
 No relationship
88. I consider my sex life:  
 Very satisfying  
 Somewhat satisfying  
 Somewhat frustrating  
 Very frustrating
89. I feel that my partner and I are:  
 Very sexually compatible  
 Somewhat sexually compatible  
 Somewhat sexually incompatible  
 Very sexually incompatible  
 No partner
90. My partner and I agree on type and frequency of sex:  
 Always  
 Usually  
 Sometimes  
 Seldom  
 Never
91. Regarding the initiation of sex:  
 I generally initiate sex  
 My partner generally initiates sex  
 We both equally initiate sex  
 No comment  
 No partner

92.Regarding sexual activity, my partner and I usually:

- Perform oral sex
- Perform hand-clitoris/vagina sex
- Use dildos and/or vibrators
- Participate in S&M (sado masochism)

93.Regarding orgasm:

- I consistently reach orgasm
- My partner consistently reaches orgasm
- Both I and my partner consistently reach orgasm
- Neither I nor my partner consistently reach orgasm
- No partner

94.If I could change one thing about my sexual relationship it would be:

- More sex
- Less sex
- Better sex
- More creative sex
- No changes

95.I would leave a relationship over:

- Sexual incompatibility
- Sexual infidelity
- Both
- Neither
- No comment

96.My partner and I show affection in public:

- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Often
- Never
- No comment
- No partner

97.I feel comfortable showing affection to:

- Heterosexual women who know I'm gay
- Heterosexual women who do not know I'm gay
- Both
- Neither

98.I feel comfortable when:

- Heterosexual women show affection to me when they know I'm gay
- Heterosexual women show affection to me when they do not know I'm gay
- Both
- Neither

## SELECTED REFERENCES

- Abbott, S., and Love, B. (1972). *Sappho Was a Right-On Woman*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Adorney, A. P. (1994). The Relationship of Emotional Cutoff to Marital Functioning and Psychological Symptom Development. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 55, (04), 1658B. (University Microfilms No. ATT 94-18694).
- Aldrich, A. (1972). *Take a Lesbian to Lunch*. New York: Manor Books.
- Allison, R. (1967). *Lesbianism: Its Secrets and Practices*. Los Angeles: Medco Books.
- Altman, D. (1971). *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*. New York: Avon.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1973). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Anderson, D. (1987). Family and Peer Relations of Gay Adolescents. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, 14, 162-178.
- Armesto, J. C. and Weisman, A. G. (2001). Attribution and Emotional Reactions to the Identity Disclosure ("Coming-out") of a Homosexual Child. *Family Process*, 40(2), 145-161.
- Ayala, J. and Coleman, H. (2000). Predictors of Depression Among Lesbian Women. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 4(3), 71-86.
- Bailey, J. M., Kim, P. Y., Hills, A., and Linsenmeier, J. A. (1997). Butch, Femme, or Straight Acting? Partner Preferences of Gay Men and Lesbians. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 960-973.
- Bailey, J. M., Willerman, L., and Parks, C. (1991). A Test of the Maternal Stress Theory of Human Male Homosexuality. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 20: 227-293.
- Barbara, A. M., Quandt, S. A., and Anderson, R. T. (2001). Experiences of Lesbians in the Health Care Environment. *Women and Health*, 34(1), 45-62.
- Beals, K. P., Impett, E. A., and Peplau, L. A. (2002). Lesbians In Love: Why Some Relationships Endure and Others End. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 6(1), 53-63.
- Beals, K. P. and Peplau, L. A. (2001). Social Involvement, Disclosure of Sexual Orientation, and the Quality of Lesbian Relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 25(1), 10-19.
- Beeler, J., and DiProva, V. (1999). Family Adjustment Following Disclosure of Homosexuality by a Member: Themes Discerned in Narrative Accounts. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 25(4), 443-459.
- Bell, A., and Weinberg, M. (1978). *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Bell, A. P., Weinberg, M. S., and Hammersmith, S. K. (1981). *Sexual Preference: Its Development Among Men and Women*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ben-Ari, A. (1995). The Discovery That an Offspring is Gay: Parents', Gay Men's, and Lesbians' Perspectives. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 30, 89-112.

- Ben-Ari, A. T. (1995). Coming Out: A Dialectic of Intimacy and Privacy. *Families in Society*, 76(5), 306-314.
- Benner, D. (1989). Toward a Psychology of Spirituality: Implications for Personality and Psychotherapy. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 8, 19-30.
- Berger, R. M. (1990). Passing: Impact of the Quality of Same-sex Couple Relationships. *Social Work*, 35(4), 328-332.
- Bernstein, B. E. (1990). Attitudes and Issues of Parents of Gay Men and Lesbians and Implications for Therapy. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 1(3), 37-53.
- Biaggio, M., Coan, S. and Adams, W. (2002). Couples Therapy for Lesbians: Understanding Merger and the Impact of Homophobia. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 6(1) 129-138.
- Blackwood, E. (2000). Culture and Women's Sexualities. *The Journal of Social Issues*, 56(2), 223-238.
- Blumstein, P. W., and Schwartz, P. (1983). *American Couples*. New York: William Morrow.
- Bocking, W. O. and Cesaretti, C. (2001). Spirituality, Transgender Identity and Coming Out. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 26(4) 291-300.
- Boxer, A. M., Cook, J. A., and Herdt, G. (1991). Double Jeopardy: Identity Transitions and Parent-child Relations Among Gay and Lesbian Youth. In K. Pillemer and K. McCartney (Eds.) *Parent-child Relations Throughout Life* (pp. 59-92). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Briere, J., and Runtz, M. (1988a). Post Sexual Abuse Trauma. In G. E. Wyatt and G. J. Powell (Eds.), *Lasting Effects of Child Sexual Abuse* (pp. 85-99). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Briere, J., and Runtz, M. (1988b). Symptomatology Associated With Childhood Sexual Victimization in a Nonclinical Adult Sample. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 12(1), 51-59.
- Briere, J., and Runtz, M. (1993). Childhood Sexual Abuse: Long-term Sequelae and Implications for Psychological Assessment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 8(3), 312-330.
- Burger, E., and Milardo, R. (1995). Marital Interdependence and Social Networks. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 12, 403-415.
- Burch, B. (1997). *Other Women: Lesbian/Bisexual Experience and Psychoanalytic Views of Women*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Burke, L. K., and Follingstad, D. R. (1999). Violence in Lesbian and Gay Relationships: Theory, Prevalence, and Correlational Factors. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 19(5), 487-512.
- Cameron, P. and Cameron, K. (1995). Does Incest Cause Homosexuality? *Psychological Reports*, 76(2), 611-621.
- Caprio, F. S., M.D. (1967). *Female Homosexuality: A Psychodynamic Study of Lesbianism*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press.
- Caron, S. L., and Ulin, M. (1997). Closeting and the Quality of Lesbian Relationships. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 78(4), 413-419.

- Carroll, N., Goldstein, R. S., Wilson, L., and Mayer, K. (1997). Gynecological Infections and Sexual Practices of Massachusetts Lesbians and Bisexual Women. *Journal of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association* 1(1), 15-23.
- Cass, V. C. (1979). Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 4, 219-235.
- Cass, V. C., (1996). Sexual Orientation Identity Formation: A Western Phenomenon. In R. P. Cabaj and T. S. Stein (Eds.), *Textbook of Homosexuality and Mental Health* (pp. 227-251). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Chan, R. W., Brooks, R. C. Raboy, B. and Patterson, C. J. Division of Labor Among Lesbian and Heterosexual Parents: Associations with Children's Adjustment. *Journal of Family Psychology* 12(3), 402-419.
- Clarke, L., and Nichols, J. (1972). *I Have More Fun With You Than Anybody*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Clunis, D. M., and Green, G. D. (1988). *Lesbian Couples*. Seattle, WA: Seal Press.
- Cochran, S. D., and Peplau, L. A. (1985). Value Orientations in Heterosexual Relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*: 9, 477-488.
- Coholic, D. (2003). Incorporating Spirituality in Feminist Social Work Perspectives. *AFFILIA*, 18(1), 49-67.
- Collier, H. (1982). *Counseling Women: A Guide for Therapies*. New York: The Free Press.
- Coleman, E. (1989). The Married Lesbian. *Marriage and Family Review*, 14(3-4), 119-135.
- Conrad/Jaffy, F. (2001). *The Ladder* 1959: DOB Questionnaire Reveals Some Facts About Lesbians. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 5(4), 1-24.
- Cory, D. W., and LeRoy, J. P. (1963). *The Homosexual and His Society*. New York: Citadel Press.
- Cory, D. W. (1971). *The Lesbian and America*. New York: Tower.
- Cramer, D., and Roach, A. (1988). Coming Out to Mom and Dad: A Study of Gay Males and their Relationships with their Parents. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 15, 79-91.
- Cunningham, B. (1971). *Gay Power: The Homosexual Revolt*. New York: Tower.
- D'Augelli, A. R. (1993). Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development During Adolescence and Young Adulthood. In R. P. Cabaj and T. S. Stein (Eds.), *Textbook of Homosexuality and Mental Health*. (pp. 267-288). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- D'Augelli, A. R., and Hershberger, S. L. (1993). Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth in Community Settings: Personal Challenges and Mental Health Problems. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 21, 421-448.
- D'Augelli, A. R., Hershberger, S. L., and Pilkington, N. W. (1998). Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth and their Families: Disclosure of Sexual Orientation and Its Consequences. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 68(3), 361-371.
- D'Augelli, A. R., Hershberger, S. L., and Pilkington, N. W. (2001). Suicidality Patterns and Sexual Orientation-related Factors Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youths. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 31(3), 250-264.
- Davis, K. B. (1972). *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women*. New York: Arno Press.

- Day, N. E. and Schoenrade, P. (2000). The Relationship Among Reported Disclosure of Sexual Orientation, Anti-discrimination Policies, Top Management Support and Work Attitudes of Gay and Lesbian Employees. *Personnel Review*, 29(3), 346-363.
- Diamond, L. M. and Savin-Williams R. C. (2000). Explaining Diversity in the Development of Same-sex Sexuality Among Young Women. *The Journal of Social Issues*, 56(2), 297-313.
- Dillard, C., and Protinsky, H. (1985). Emotional Cutoff: A Comparative Analysis of Clinical Versus Nonclinical Populations. *International Journal of Family Psychology*, 6, 339-349.
- Driscoll, J. M, Kelley, F. A. and Fassinger, R. E. (1996). Lesbian Identity and Disclosure in the Workplace: Relation to Occupational Stress and Satisfaction. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 48(2), 229-242.
- Duffy, S. M., and Rusbult, C. E. (1986). Satisfaction and Commitment in Homosexual and Heterosexual Relationships. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 12(2), 1-24.
- Dunbar, J., Brown, M. and Amorosa, D. (1974). Some Correlates of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 1, 27-35.
- Eldridge, N. S., and Gilbert, L. A. (1990). Correlates of Relationship Satisfaction in Lesbian Couples. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 14(1), 43-62.
- Elkins, D. N. (1999). Spirituality: It's What's Missing in Mental Health. *Psychology Today*.
- Ellswood, R. (1990). Religion. In R. Hunter (Ed.), *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Nashville, TN: Abington Press.
- Elze, D. E. (2002). Against All Odds: The Dating Experiences of Adolescent Lesbian and Bisexual Women. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 6(1) 17-29.
- Ennis, S. A. (1998). Flunking Basic Gender Training. In D. Atkins (Ed.) *Looking queer: Body Image and Identity in Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Communities*. New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Ennis, S. A. and Lloyd, M. (1995). "G. I. Joes in Barbie Land": Recontextualizing Butch in Twentieth-century Lesbian Culture. *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, 7, 1-23.
- Faderman, L. (1981). *Surpassing the Love of Men*. New York: William and Company.
- Faderman, L. (1991). *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fassinger, R. E. (1991). The Hidden Minority: Issues and Challenges in Working with Lesbian Women and Gay Men. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 19, 157-176.
- Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis, I. A., and Smith, C. (1990). Sexual Abuse in a National Survey of Adult Men and Women: Prevalence, Characteristics, and Risk Factors. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14(1), 19-28.
- Fischer, P. (1972). *The Gay Mystique: The Myth and Reality of Male Homosexuality*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Floyd, F. J. and Stein, T. S. (2002). Sexual Orientation Identity Formation Among Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youths: Multiple Patterns of Milestone. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 12(2), 167-191.

- Franke, R. and Leary, M. R. (1991). Disclosure of Sexual Orientation by Lesbians and Gay Men: A Comparison of Private and Public Processes. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 10(3), 262-269.
- Furman, W., Brown, B. B., and Feiring, C. (1999). (Eds.). *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gagnon, J. H., and Simon, W. (1973). *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gartrell, N. (1984). Combating Homophobia in the Psychotherapy of Lesbians. *Women and Therapy*, 3(1), 13-29.
- Gearhart, S., and Johnson, W. R. Eds. (1974). *Loving Women/Loving Men: Gay Liberation and the Church*. San Francisco, Glide Publications.
- Gibson, P. (1989). Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide. In ADAMHA, *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* (DHHS Publication No. ADM 89-1623; Vol. 3, pp. 110-142). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Gibson, S. (1996). *The Psychotherapy Experiences, Concerns, and Preferences of Lesbians and Gay Men*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada.
- Giese, Hans Ed. (1970). *Sexuality of Women*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Golden, C. (1987). Diversity and Variability in Women's Sexual Identities. In Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective (Ed.), *Lesbian Psychologies: Explorations and Challenges* (pp. 19-34). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Golombok, S. and Tasker, F. (1996). Do Parents Influence the Sexual Orientation of Their Children? Findings From A Longitudinal Study of Lesbian Families. *Developmental Psychology*, 32(1), 3-11.
- Gornick, V., and Moran B. (Eds.) (1972). *Woman in Sexist Society*. New York: Signet.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994). *What Predict Divorce? The Relationship Between Marital Processes and Marital Outcomes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Grambling, L. F., Carr, R. L., and McCain, N. L. (2000). Family Responses to Disclosure of Self-as-lesbian. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 21(7), 653-669.
- Grellert, E. A., Newcomb, M. D., and Bentler, P. M. (1982). Childhood Play Activities of Male and Female Homosexuals and Heterosexuals. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 11: 451-478.
- Gross, A. A. (1962). *Strangers in Our Midst: Problems of the Homosexual in American Society*. Washington: Public Affairs Press.
- Groves, P. and Schondel, C. (1996). Lesbian Couples Who are Survivors of Incest: Group Work Utilizing a Feminist Approach. *Social Work with Groups*, 19(3-4), 93-103.
- Guyon, R. (1934). *The Ethics of Sexual Acts*. Westminister, MD: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Haldeman, D. C. (2002). Gay Rights, Patient Rights: The Implications of Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy. *Professional Psychology – Research and Practice*, 33(3), 260-264.
- Hall, R. (1966). *The Well of Loneliness*. New York: Pocket Books.

- Harry, J. (1989). Sexual Identity Issues. In ADAMHA, *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* (DHHS Publication No. ADM 89-1622; Vol. 2, pp. 131-142). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Hart, H. L. (1963). *Law, Liberty and Morality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Healy, T. (1993). A Struggle for Language: Patterns of Self-disclosure in Lesbian Couples. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 63(3), 247-264.
- Heavey, C. L., Layne, C., and Christensen, A. (1993). Gender and Conflict Structure in Marital Interaction: A Replication and Extension. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61, 16-27.
- Henley, N. M. and Pincus, F. (1978). Interrelationship of Sexist, Racist, and Antihomosexual Attitudes. *Psychological Reports*, 42, 83-90.
- Herek, G. M. (1996). Heterosexism and Homophobia. In R. P. Cabaj and T. S. Stein (Eds.), *Textbook of Homosexuality and Mental Health* (pp. 101-113), Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Hershberger, S. L. and D'Augelli, A. R. (1995). The Impact of Victimization on the Mental Health and Suicidality of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youths. *Developmental Psychology*, 31(1), 65-74.
- Hitchcock, J. M. and Wilson, H. S. (1992). Personal Risking: Lesbian Self-disclosure of Sexual Orientation to Professional Health Care Providers. *Nursing Research*, 41(3), 178-183.
- Holtzen, D. W. and Agrestic, A. A. (1990). Parental Responses to Gay and Lesbian Children: Differences in Homophobia, Self-esteem, and Sex-role Stereotyping. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 9(3), 390-399.
- Holtzen, D. W., Kenny, M. E., and Mahalik, J. R. (1995). Contributions of Parental Attachment to Gay or Lesbian Disclosure to Parents and Dysfunctional Cognitive Processes. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 42(3), 350-355.
- Hooker, E. (1957). The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual. *Journal of Projective Techniques*, 21, 18-31.
- Humphreys, L. (1972). *Out of the Closets: The Sociology of Homosexual Liberation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hunt, M. (1974). *Sexual Behavior in the Seventies*. Chicago: Playboy Press.
- Hyde, H. M. (1970). *The Love That Dared Not Speak Its Name*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Hyman, B. (2000). The Economic Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse for Adult Lesbian Women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(1), 199-211.
- Iasenza, S. (2002). Beyond Lesbian Bed Death: The Passion and Play in Lesbian Relationships. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(1), 111-120.
- Igartua, K. (1998). *Therapy With Lesbian Couples: The Issues and the Interventions*. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 43, 391-396.
- Inness, J. (1999). Lesbian Sexual Renegades? *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 3(3), 123-132.
- Jay, K., and Young, A. (Eds.) (1972). *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*. New York: Quick Fox.

- Johnson, S. R., Guenther, S. M., Laube, D. W. and Keetel, W. C. (1981). Factors Influencing Lesbian Gynecologic Care: A Preliminary Study. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 140(1), 20-28.
- Johnson, S. R., Smith, E. M., and Guenther, S. M. (1987). Comparison of Gynecologic Health Care Problems Between Lesbians and Bisexual Women. *The Journal of Reproductive Medicine*, 32(11), 805-811.
- Johnston, J. (1973). *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Jordan, K. M. (1995). *Coming Out and Relationship Quality for Lesbian Women*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Maryland.
- Jordan, K. M. and Deluty, R.H. (2000). Social Support, Coming Out, and Relationship Satisfaction in Lesbian Couples. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 4(1), 145-164.
- Kaminski, E. (2000). Lesbian Health: Social Context, Sexual Identity and Well-Being. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 4(3), 87-101. .
- Karlen, A. (1971). *Sexuality and Homosexuality: A New View*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Katchadourian, H., and Lunde, D. (1972). *Fundamentals of Human Sexuality*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
- Kimmel, D. C. (1992). The Families of Older Gay Men and Lesbians. *Generations*, 16(3) & 17(3), 37-38. American Society on Aging, US.
- Kinsey, A. C., Pomeroy, W. B., Martin, C. E. and Gebhard, P. H. (1953). *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.
- Kirkman, A. M. (2001). Ties That Bind: Recognizing the Spiritual. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 5(1,2), 211-227.
- Kling, S. G. (1965). *Sexual Behavior and the Law*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Krakauer, I. D. and Rose, S. M. (2002). The Impact of Group Membership on Lesbians' Physical Appearance. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(1), 31-43.
- Krestam, J., and Bepko, C. L. (1980). *The Problem of Fusion in the Lesbian Couple*. *Family Process*, 19, 277-289.
- Kurdek, L. A. (1988). Perceived Social Support in Gays and Lesbians in Cohabiting Relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 504-509.
- Kurdek, L. A. (1994). The Nature and Correlates of Relationship Quality in Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Cohabiting Couples: A Test of the Individual Difference, Interdependence, and Discrepancy Models. In B. Green and G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues: Vol. 1. Lesbian and Gay Psychology: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications* (133-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kurdek, L. A. (1994). Lesbian and Gay Couples. In A. R. D'Augelli and C. J. Patterson (Eds.), *Lesbian and Gay Identities Over the Lifespan: Psychological Perspectives on Personal, Relational, and Community Processes* (pp. 243-261). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kurdek, L. A. (1994). The Nature and Correlates of Relationship Quality in Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Cohabiting Couples. In B. Green and G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Lesbian and Gay Psychology: Vol 1* (pp. 113-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Kurdek, L. A. (1995). Developmental Changes in Relationship Quality in Gay and Lesbian Cohabiting Couples. *Developmental Psychology*, 31(1), 86-94.
- Kurdek, L. A. (1998). Relationship Outcomes and their Predictors: Longitudinal Evidence from Heterosexual Married, Gay Cohabiting, and Lesbian Cohabiting Couples. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(3), 553-568.
- Kurdek, L. A. and Schmitt, J. P. (1986). Early Development of Relationship Quality in Heterosexual Married, Heterosexual Cohabiting, Gay, and Lesbian Couples. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(3), 305-309.
- Kurdek, L. A. and Schmitt, J. P. (1986). Relationship Quality of Partners in Heterosexual Married, Heterosexual Cohabiting, and Gay and Lesbian Relationship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(4), 711-720.
- Kurdek, L. A. and Schmitt, J. P. (1987). Partner Homogamy in Married, Heterosexual Cohabiting, Gay and Lesbian Couples. *Journal of Sex Research*, 23, 212-232.
- Kurdek, L. A. and Schmitt, J. P. (1987). Perceived Emotional Support from Family and Friends in Members of Homosexual, Married, and Heterosexual Cohabiting Couples. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 14(3/4), 57-67.
- Kuhn, D. (1965). *The Church and the Homosexual*. San Francisco: Glide Publications.
- Lance, L. M. (1994). Do Reductions in Homophobia from Heterosexual Interactions with Gay Persons Continue?: A Study of Social Contact Theory of Intergroup Tension. *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 24, 423-434.
- LaSala, M. (2002). Walls and Bridges: How Coupled Gay Men and Lesbians Manage Their Intergenerational Relationships. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 28(3), 327-339.
- LaSala, M. C. (2001). The Importance of Partners to Lesbians' Intergenerational Relationships. *Social Work Research*, 25, 27-36.
- Laumann, E. O., Gagnon, J. H., Michael, R. T., and Michaels, S. (1994). *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lehmann, J. B., Lehmann, C. U., and Kelly, P. J. (1998). Development and Health Care Needs of Lesbians. *Journal of Women's Health*, 7(3), 379-388.
- Levental, B., and Lundy, S. E. (Eds.). (1999). *Same-sex Domestic Violence: Strategies for Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lewis, J. (1989). *The Birth of the Family: An Empirical Inquiry*. New York: Brunner Mazel.
- Lie, G. Y., Schilit, R., Bush, J., Montagne, M., and Reyes, L. (1991). Lesbians in Currently Aggressive Relationships: How Frequently Do They Report Aggressive Past Relationships? *Violence and Victims*, 6(2), 121-135.
- Lockhart, L. L., White, B. W., Causby, V., and Isaac, A. (1994). Letting Out the Secret: Violence in Lesbian Relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 9(4), 469-492.
- Lorde, Audre. (1980). *The Cancer Journals*. New York: Spinsters, Ink.
- Loulan, J. (1984). *Lesbian Sex*. Duluth, MN: Spinsters Ink
- Loulan, J. (1987). *Lesbian Passion*. Duluth, MN: Spinsters Ink.
- Loulan, J. (1990). *The Lesbian Erotic Dance: Butch, Femme, Androgyny and Other Rhythms*. San Francisco: Spinsters.

- Lyon, P., and Martin, D. (1959). *The Ladder*. San Francisco, CA: Daughters of Bilitis (DOB).
- MacDonald, A. and Games, R. (1974). Some Characteristics of Those Who Hold Positive and Negative Attitudes Toward Homosexuals. *Journal of Homosexuality* 1, 9-27.
- Maguen, S., Floyd, F. J., Bakeman, R. and Armistead, L. (2002). Developmental Milestones and Disclosure of Sexual Orientation Among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youths. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 23(2), 219-233.
- Mahaffy, K. A. (1996). Cognitive Dissonance and Its Resolution: A Study of Lesbian Christians. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 35, 392-402.
- Markman, H. J., Renick, M. J., Floyd, F., and Stanley, S. M. (1993). Preventing Marital Distress Through Effective Communication and Conflict Management Training: 4- and 5-year Follow-up. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 61, 70-77.
- Markowe, L. A. (1996). *Redefining the Self. Coming Out as Lesbian*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Marmor, J. (Ed.) (1965). *Sexual Inversion: The Multiple Roots of Homosexuality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Martin, A. and Hetrick, E. S. (1988). The Stigmatization of the Gay and Lesbian Adolescent. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 15, 163-184.**
- Martin, A. D., and Hetrick, E. S. (1988). The Stigmatization of the Gay and Lesbian Adolescent. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 15, 163-184.**
- Martin, D., and Lyon, P. (1972). *Lesbian/Woman*. New York: Bantam.
- Masters, W. H., and Johnson, V. E. (1966). *Human Sexual Response*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Mays, V. M. and Cochran, S. D. (2001). Mental Health Correlates of Perceived Discrimination Among Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Adults In the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(11), 1869-1876.
- McCaffrey, J. A. (Ed.) (1972). *The Homosexual Dialectic*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- McGrath, E., Keita, G. P., Strickland, B. R., and Russo, N. F. (Eds.). (1990). *Women and Depression. Risk Factors and Treatment Issues. Final Report of the American Psychological Association's National Task Force on Women and Depression*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- McGregor, B. A., Carver, C. S., Antoni, M. H., Weiss, S., Yount, S. E. and Ironson, G. (2001). Distress And Internalized Homophobia Among Lesbian Women Treated For Early Stage Breast Cancer. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 25(1), 1-9.
- McHugh, M. (1973). *The Woman Thing*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- McWhirter, D. P. and Mattison, A. M. (1984). *The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Mercer, J. D. (1959). *They Walk in Shadows: A Study on the Ambisexual and Homosexual Components and Our Contemporary Sex Laws*. New York: Comet Press.

- Merighi, J. R. and Grimes, M. D. (2000). Coming Out to Families in a Multicultural Context. *Families In Society*, 81(1), 32-41.
- Miller, I. (1973). *Patience and Sarah*. New York: Crest.
- Miller, M. (1972). *On Being Different: What It Means to be a Homosexual*. New York: Popular Library.
- Mirowsky, J. and Ross, C. (1989b). *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Mohr, J. and Fassinger, R. (2000). Measuring Dimensions of Lesbian and Gay Male Experience. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 33(2), 66-90.
- Morgan, K. S. (1992). Caucasian Lesbians' Use of Psychotherapy: A Matter of Attitude? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16, 127-130.
- Morris, J. F. (1997). Lesbian Coming Out as a Multidimensional Process. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 33(2), 1-22.
- Morris, J. F. and Rothblum, E. D. (1999). Who Fills Out A "Lesbian" Questionnaire? The Interrelationship of Sexual Orientation, Years "Out," Disclosure of Sexual Orientation, Sexual Experience with Women, and Participation in the Lesbian Community. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 23(3), 537-557.
- Muller, A. (1987). *Parents Matter: Parents Relationships with Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons*. Tallahassee, FL: Naiad Press.
- Murphy, B. C. (1989). Lesbian Couples and their Parents: The Effects of Perceived Parental Attitudes on the Couple. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 68(1), 46-51.
- Myers, A., Taub, J., Morris, J. F., and Rothblum, E. D. (1999). Beauty Mandates and the Appearance Obsession: Are Lesbian and Bisexual Women Better Off? In J. C. Cogan and J. M. Erickson (Eds.), *Lesbians, Levis, and Lipstick: The Meaning of Beauty in our Lives* (pp. 15-26). Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Myers, D. G. (1993). *The Pursuit of Happiness*. New York: Avon.
- National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation. (1987). *National Lesbian Health Care Survey: Mental Health Implications*. Unpublished report. Atlanta: Author.
- Neeman, J., Hubbard, J., and Masten, A. S. (1995). The Changing Importance of Romantic Relationships to Competence From Late Childhood to Late Adolescence. *Development and Psychopathology*, 7, 727-750.
- Oberholzer, W. D. (Ed.) (1971). *Is Gay Good? Ethics, Theology and Homosexuality*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.
- Oliver, B. J. Jr. (1967). *Sexual Deviation in American Society: A Social-Psychological Study of Sexual Non-Conformity*. New Haven, CT: College and University Press.
- Ossana, S. M. (2000). Relationship and Couples Counseling. In R. M. Perez, K. A. Debord, & K. J. Bieschke (Eds.) *Handbook of Counseling and Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients* (pp. 275-302). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Oswald, Ramona Faith (2002). Inclusion and Belonging in the Family Rituals of Gay and Lesbian People. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 16(4), 428-436.

- Ovesey, L. (1969). *Homosexuality and Pseudohomosexuality*. New York: Jason Aronson, Inc.
- Parker, W. (1971). *Homosexuality: A Selected Bibliography of Over Three Thousand Items*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Peplau, L. A. (2001). Rethinking Women's Sexual Orientation: An Interdisciplinary Relationship-focused Approach. *Personal Relationships*, 8, 1-20.
- Peplau, L. A., and Garnets, L. D. (Eds.) (2000). A New Paradigm for Understanding Women's Sexuality and Sexual Orientation. *The Journal of Social Issues*, 56(2), 329-350.
- Peplau, L. A., and Garnets, L. D. (Eds.) (2000). Women's Sexualities: New Perspectives on Sexual Orientation and Gender. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56, 181-192.
- Peplau, L. A., and Spalding, L. R. (2000). The Close Relationships of Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals. In C. Hendrick and S. S. Hendrick (Eds.), *Close Relationships: A Sourcebook* (pp. 111-124). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peplau, L. A., Padesky, C., and Hamilton, M. (1982). Satisfaction in Lesbian Relationships. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 8(2), 23-35.
- Perry, T., and Lucas, C. L. (1972). *The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay*. New York: Bantam.
- Peters, S. D. (1988). Child Sexual Abuse and Later Psychological Problems. In G. E. Wyatt and G. J. Powell (Eds.), *Lasting Effects of Child Sexual Abuse* (pp. 101-117). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Phillips, G. and Over, R. (1995). Differences Between Heterosexual, Bisexual and Lesbian Women in Recalled Childhood Experiences. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 24(1), 1-20.
- Piedmont, R. L. (1999a). Does Spirituality Represent the Sixth Factor of Personality? Spiritual Transcendence and the Five-factor Model. *Journal of Personality*, 67, 985-1013.
- Piedmont, R. L. (2001). Spirituality Transcendence and the Scientific Study of Spirituality. *Journal of Rehabilitation*.
- Pittenger, W. N. (1970). *Time for Consent*. London, England: SCM Press.
- Pomeroy, W. (1972). *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research*. New York: Signet.
- Posner, R. A. (1992). *Sex and Reason*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rees, J. T. (Ed.), and Usill, H. V. (1955). *They Stand Apart: A Critical Survey of the Problems of Homosexuality*. London: Heinemann.
- Reik, T. (1959). *The Compulsion to Confess*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy.
- Renzetti, C. M. (1998). Violence and Abuse in Lesbian Relationships: Theoretical and Empirical Issues. In R. K. Bergen (Ed.), *Issues in Intimate Violence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Renzetti, C. M., and Miley, C. H. (1996). *Violence in Gay and Lesbian Domestic Partnerships*. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Rix, S. E. (1990). *The American Woman 1990-91*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Robertiello, Richard C. (1959). *Journey From Lesbos*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press.

- Roberts, S. J. and Sorensen, L. (1999). Prevalence of Childhood Sexual Abuse and Related Sequelae in a Lesbian Population. *Journal of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association*, 3(1), 11-19.
- Roberts, S. J., Sorensen, L., Patsdaughter, C. S. and Grindel, C. (2000). Sexual Behaviors and Sexually Transmitted Diseases of Lesbians: Results of the Boston Lesbian Health Project. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 4(3), 49-70.
- Robinson, D. M. (1924). *Sappho and Her Influence*. New York: Longmans.
- Rosario, M., Hunter, J., Maguen, S., Gwadz, M. and Smith, R. (2001). The Coming Out Process and Its Adoptional and Health-related Associations Among Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youths: *Stipulation and Exploration of a Model*, 29(1), 113-160.
- Rose, S. M. and Zand, D. (2000). Lesbian Dating and Courtship From Young Adulthood to Midlife. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(1), 85-109.
- Rose, Suzanna M. (2002). Lesbian Love and Relationships. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 6(1) 1-3.
- Rosen, D. H. (1973). *Lesbianism: A Study of Female Homosexuality*. Springfield, IL: C. C. Thomas.
- Rosenfels, P. (1971). *Homosexuality: The Psychology of the Creative Process*. Long Island, NY: Libra.
- Rothblum, E. D. (1990). Depression Among Lesbians: An Invisible and Unresearched Phenomenon. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 1 (3), 67-87.
- Rothblum, E. D. (2000). Sexual Orientation and Sex in Women's Lives: Conceptual and Methodological Issues. *The Journal of Social Issues*, 56(2), 193-204.
- Rubin, G. (1992). Of Catamites and Kings: Reflections on Butch, Gender, and Boundaries. In J. Nestle (Ed.), *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-butch Reader* (pp. 466-482). Boston: Alyson Publications, Inc.
- Ruitenbeck, H. M. (1963). *The Problem of Homosexuality in Modern Society*. New York: Dutton & Co.
- Rusbult, E. E. (1983). A Longitudinal Test of the Investment Model: The Development (and Deterioration) of Satisfaction and Commitment in Heterosexual Involvements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 101-117.
- Saghir, M. T., and Robins, E. (1973). *Male and Female Homosexuality: A Comprehensive Investigation*. Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins.
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (1990). *Gay and Lesbian Youth: Expressions of Identity*. Washington, DC: Hemisphere.
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (1996). Dating and Romantic Relationships Among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youths. In R. C. Williams and K. M. Cohen (Eds.), *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals* (pp. 166-180). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (1998). ".....And Then I Became Gay:" *Young Men's Stories*. New York: Routledge.
- Savin-Williams, R. C. and Berndt, T.J. (1990). Friendships and Peer Relations. In S. S. Feldman and G. R. Elliot (Eds.) *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent* (pp. 277-307). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Schofield, M. (1965). *Sociological Aspects of Homosexuality*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

- Schneider, B. E. (1986). Coming Out at Work: Bridging the Private/Public Gap. *Work and Occupations*, 13(4), 463-487.
- Schneiders, S. (1986). Theology and spirituality: Strangers, Rivals or Partners? *Horizons*, 13, 253-274.
- Schreurs, K. M. G., and Buunk, B. P. (1996). Closeness, Autonomy, Equity and Relationship Satisfaction in Lesbian Couples. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 20, 577-592.
- Schur, E. M. (1965). *Crimes Without Victims: Deviant Behavior and Public Police: Abortion, Homosexuality, Drug Addiction*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Serdahely, W. J. and Ziemba, G. J. (1984). Changing Homophobic Attitudes Through College Sexuality Education. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 10, 109-116.
- Sharma, U. D., and Rudy, W. C., Comps. (1970). *Homosexuality: A Selected Bibliography*. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Waterloo Lutheran University.
- Smith, C. A. and Stillman, S. (2002). Butch/Femme In the Personal Advertisements of Lesbians. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(1), 45-51.
- Smith, R. B., and Brown, R. A. (1997). The Impact of Social Support on Gay Male Couples. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 33, 39-61.
- Stein, A. (1992). All Dressed Up, But No Place to Go? Style Wars and the New Lesbianism. In J. Nestle (Ed.), *The Persistent Desire* (pp. 431-439). Boston: Alyson.
- Stein, J. A., Golding, J. M., Siegel, J. M., Burnam, M. A., and Sorenson, S. B. (1988). Long-term Psychological Sequelae of Child Sexual Abuse: The Los Angeles Epidemiologic Catchment Area study. In G. E. Wyatt and G. J. Powell (Eds.), *Lasting Effects of Child Sexual Abuse* (pp. 135-154). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Sternberg, R. J., and Grajek, S. (1984). The Nature of Love. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 47, 312-329.
- Stevens, Patricia. (1993). "Lesbian Health Care Research: A Review of the Literature from 1970 to 1990." In *Lesbian Health: What Are the Issues?* edited by Phyllis Noerager Stern. Washington, DC: Taylor and Francis.
- Snyder, M. (1996). Intimate partners: A Context for the Intensification and Healing of Emotional Pain. *Women and Therapy*, 19(3), 79-92.
- Tait, D (1997). Stress and Social Support Networks Among Lesbian and Heterosexual Women: A Comparison Study. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 67, 213-224.
- Timmerman, J. H. (2001). When Religion Is Its Own Worst Enemy: How Therapists Can Help People Shed Hurtful Notions That Masquerade As Good Theology. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 26(4), 259-266.
- Thompson, N. L., McCandless, B. R., and Strickland, B. R. (1971). Personal Adjustment of Male and Female Homosexuals and Heterosexuals. *Journals of Abnormal Psychology*, 78, 237-240.
- Tobin, K., and Wicker, R. (1972). *The Gay Crusaders*. New York: Paperback Library.
- Tripp, C. A. (1974). *Anatomy of Homosexuality*. New York: Atheneum.

- Trippet, Susan and Joyce Bain. (1993). "Reasons American Lesbians Fail to Seek Traditional Health Care." In *Lesbian Health: What Are the Issues?* Edited by Phyllis Noerager Stern. Washington, DC: Taylor and Francis.
- Troiden, R. R. (1989). The Formation of Homosexual Identities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 17, 43-73.
- U. S. Census Bureau (2000). U. S. Census 2000.
- Warren, C. A. B. (1974). *Identity and Community in the Gay World*. New York: Wiley.
- Wayment, H. A., and Peplau, L. A. (1995). Social Support and Well-being Among Lesbian and Heterosexual Women: A Structural Modeling Approach. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21, 1189-1199.
- Weber, J. C. (1996). Social Class as a Correlate of Gender Identity Among Lesbian Women. *Sex Roles*, 35, 271-279.
- Weinberg, G. (1973). *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*. New York: Anchor.
- Weinberg, M., and Bell, Alan, Eds. (1972). *Homosexuality: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Wells, J. W. and Kline, W. B. (1987). Self Disclosure of Homosexual Orientation. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 127(2), 191-197.
- Weltge, R. W., Ed. (1969). *The Same Sex: An Appraisal of Homosexuality*. Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press.
- West, C. M. (1998). Leaving a Second Closet: Outing Partner Violence in Same-sex Couples. In J. L. Jasinski and L. M. Williams (Eds.), *Partner Violence: A Comprehensive Review of 20 Years of Research* (pp. 163-783). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- West, C. M. (2002). Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence: Prevalence and Dynamics. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(1), 121-127.
- West, D. J. (1968). *Homosexuality*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Whitman, F. L., and Mathy, R. M. (1991). Childhood Cross-gender Behavior of Homosexual Females in Brazil, Peru, the Philippines, and the United States. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 20: 151-170.
- Wilber, K. (2000). *A Brief History of Everything*. New York: Shambhala Publications.
- Wilcox (1953). Ethical Marriage. Reprinted in Williams, J. *Interpretations of Women: Readings in Psychology*. Lexington, MA: Xerox College Publishing.
- Wise, A. J. and Bowman, S. L. (1997). Comparison of Beginning Counselors' Responses to Lesbian vs Heterosexual Partner Abuse. *Violence and Victims*, 12(2), 127-135.
- Wolff, C. (1972). *Love Between Women*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Wright, L. W., Jr. and Cullen, J. M. (2001). Reducing College Students' Homophobia, Erotophobia, and Conservatism Levels Through A Human Sexuality Course. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 26(4), 328-333.
- Wyden, P., and Wyden, B. (1968). *Growing Up Straight: What Every Thoughtful Parent Should Know about Homosexuality*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Wyers, N. L. (1987). Homosexuality in the Family: Lesbian and Gay Spouses. *Social Work*, 32(2), 143-148.
- Wysor, B. (1974). *Lesbian Myth: Insights and Conversations*. Westminister, Md.: Random House.

- Yarber, W. and Yee, B. (1983). Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Lesbianism and Male Homosexuality: Their Affective Orientation Toward Sexuality and Sex Guilt. *Journal of American College Health*, 31, 203-208.
- Yarhouse, M. A. and Burkett, L. A. (2002). An Inclusive Response to LGB and Conservative Religious Persons: The Case of Same-Sex Attraction and Behavior. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33(3), 235-241.
- Zachary, J. *Sexual Behavior of the Lesbian*. Chatsworth, CA: Socio Library Books, 1972.