1. **"Openness may not completely disarm prejudice, but it's a good place to start."--Jason Collins, first openly gay athlete in U.S. pro sports**
2. **"The only queer people are those who don't love anybody."--Rita Mae Brown**
3. **"This world would be a whole lot better if we just made an effort to be less horrible to one another."--Ellen Page**
4. **"Why is it that, as a culture, we are more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands?"--Author Ernest J. Gaines**
5. **"I hate the word homophobia. It's not a phobia. You're not scared. You're an ignorant."**
6. **"I believe that no one should ever have to choose between a career we love and living our lives with authenticity and integrity"--Out & Equal Executive Director Selisse Berry**
7. **"Every gay and lesbian person who has been lucky enough to survive the turmoil of growing up is a survivor. Survivors always have an obligation to those who will face the same challenges."--Writer/actor Bob Paris**
8. **"I think being gay is a blessing, and it's something I am thankful for every single day."--Anderson Cooper**
9. **"Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself."--Harvey Fierstein**
10. **"The beauty of standing up for your rights is others see you standing and stand up as well."--Advice columnist Cassandra Duffy**
11. **"I've been embraced by a new community. That's what happens when you’re finally honest about who you are; you find others like you."--Chaz Bono**
12. ***"Somebody,*your father or mine, should have told us that not many people have ever died of love. But multitudes have perished, and are perishing every hour--and in the oddest places! --for the lack of it."--Author James Baldwin**
13. **"We should indeed keep calm in the face of difference, and live our lives in a state of inclusion and wonder at the diversity of humanity."--George Takei**

LGBT Issues

Gender Issues are commonly referred to as LGBT issues. These acronyms refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender and are used to emphasize diverse sex and gender identity-based cultures. The key word here is “identity.” We all see ourselves differently in different contexts and we all struggle from time to time with the question, “Who am I?” However, for people who feel that a core aspect of themselves like gender and/or sexuality is not being expressed or who are overly concerned with other people’s impressions and opinions, the struggle can be acute and painful.

Sexual Orientation

A person’s sexual orientation is not necessarily a black or white matter. The term is used to describe both our patterns of emotional, romantic and sexual attraction and our sense of identity based on those attractions. Our sense of personal and social identity falls somewhere along a continuum, with exclusive attraction to the opposite sex on one end and exclusive attraction to the same sex on the other.

The three most common (but by no means the only) categories of sexual orientation are:

* **Heterosexuality** – attraction to the opposite sex
* **Homosexuality** – attraction to the same sex
* **Bisexuality** – attraction to members of either sex

Most scientists agree that both nature and nurture play complex roles in determining sexual orientation, but there are no concrete answers and the issue is hotly contested.

Gender Issue Causes

People in our society should not suffer any injustice or oppression because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Sadly, this is not the case and many people experience challenges in their communities, whether at home, school or work.

* Lack of social acceptance
* Job discrimination
* Rejection by family
* Acts of harassment or violence
* Confusion about gender or sexual orientation

Young people who are LGBT and experience high levels of family rejection are more than eight times as likely to attempt suicide.

Gender Issue Treatment

While identifying as LGBT is not a mental health condition or mental illness, mental health challenges can be brought on by things like rejection, isolation, victimization or a struggle with self-acceptance. Anxiety, depression and/or substance abuse can be more common in people who experience LGBT bias.

**Behavioral therapy** – Individual therapy, family therapy and group therapy can be helpful in dealing with issues surrounding gender identity and sexual orientation. Support groups can be especially beneficial in offering acceptance and affirmation for those who have experienced discrimination or other negative events.

**Medications** – Some of the symptoms caused by LGBT bias such as anxiety and depression can be controlled with medication.

The most important thing in dealing with gender issues is to know that people do not choose their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We seek to understand, support and affirm lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children, youth, and families. We’ve supported many clients as they have addressed challenges and returned to a state of emotional well-being in their homes and communities.