



Common Misconceptions About Homosexuality

1. Gays are 10% of the population

No academic would agree. Numerous surveys in many countries show that (including bisexuals) gays are 2-3% of the population and lesbians are 1-2%.

2. Gay relationships are as stable and long-lasting as those of heterosexuals

Gay relationships last about 4.5 years for both gays and lesbians. In the divorce-prone USA a heterosexual couple has nearly an even chance of reaching their silver wedding anniversary (25y).

3. Gays are extremely promiscuous

Both gays and lesbians have 3-4 times as many partners as heterosexuals (comparison of medians). (Some people think this is extreme, some don't.)

4. Gays and lesbians are psychologically on par with heterosexuals

A good rule of thumb is that gays and lesbians have 3 times as many problems. All are prone to suicide attempts. Otherwise problems are mostly depression and other mood disorders for men and substance abuse problems for women, though there are many others.

5. Gay psychological problems are a result of societal discrimination and rejection

Very little evidence has been found for this. Whether in tolerant and accepting environments or in intolerant ones, the incidence and type of psychological problems remain about the same.

6. Gays are born that way

From six studies (2000-2011): if an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances that the co-twin has it too are only about 11% for men and 14% for women. This means that factors the twins have in common, such as genes and upbringing are mostly not responsible – individual and idiosyncratic responses to random events and to common factors predominate.

7. Gays say they have been this way ever since they can remember

For anyone, gay or straight, the mean age of first attraction is 10. For two thirds it is between the ages of 6 and 14. It is therefore highly atypical that same-sex attraction is an earliest memory. What are probably being remembered are early longings to belong to same sex gender groups, emanating from feelings of insecurity and difference.

8. Gays choose this lifestyle

There can be little informed, responsible choice involved if first attraction is about age 10. At that age no-one chooses life-time sexual orientation or lifestyle in any usual sense. Same sex attraction is discovered to exist in oneself rather than chosen.

9. Nobody knows how same sex attraction develops

Many same sex attracted people do, being able to trace it to early experiences of sexual abuse, reactions to breakdowns in family relationships, exclusion from same sex peer groups, porn. Others are not used to thinking about predisposing circumstances and have no idea how their homosexual orientation developed – just as most heterosexuals have no idea how they became heterosexual. There are many paths, each relatively minor in the overall picture, but very important to those individuals whom they affect.

10. Sexual orientation cannot be changed

Neutral academic surveys show there is substantial change. About half of the homosexual/bisexual population (in a non-therapeutic environment) moves towards heterosexuality over a lifetime. About 3% of the present heterosexual population once firmly believed themselves to be homosexual or bisexual. Sexual orientation is not set in concrete.

11. Gay teens need special counselling support in schools

In the West today, 98% of today's teens who believe they are homosexual at 16 will believe they are heterosexual one year later. It is irresponsible to offer gay affirmative counselling to teens on the grounds that the homosexual orientation is intrinsic and fixed.

12. Therapy producing change in sexual orientation is damaging

The best longitudinal study (backed up by many others) shows most people change to some extent - from slightly to 100%. Positive and negative effects are typical of outcomes for most other therapies. Re-orientation therapies also decrease depression, and substance abuse.

13. Private sexual acts do not affect society

Male gay sex is medically risky and surveys put the number of practising gay/bisexual men who are married at about 15%. Sexual activity (gay or straight) outside long-term, faithful, committed relationships is ultimately a cost to the state in numerous ways. (See 2)