

ABOUT PFLAG

WHAT IS PFLAG?

PFLAG is an organisation, which supports and promotes the health and well being of gay lesbian bisexual and transgendered people and their families.

WHAT DOES PFLAG DO?

OUR CONTACTS are listed at the end of this page. We offer confidential listening and help for anyone who is struggling to accept a gay family member.

We can also provide more information about our meetings.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

In a caring atmosphere, parents, families and friends can share their difficulties, as they begin to understand those they love and learn to cope with the attitudes they encounter in their community.

We also welcome parents who may not need help but may be able to offer wisdom and friendship. The love and support of their families is vital for young, (and older!) gay people to develop a sense of their own worth and live full and happy lives. All discussions are confidential and many people in the group, prefer at first to listen and not to talk.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

We offer information to the public to promote better understanding of the many issues around homosexuality. We provide a website with information for young gay people, their families, and also for schools, health providers, counsellors and others in the community. We also support and work with other community agencies, towards human and civil rights for gay, lesbian bisexual and transgendered people.

PARENTS REACTIONS

When parents learn that their child is gay they usually suffer a very real grief. They fear that others will condemn them and their children, so they keep it a secret. This is called "being in the closet"

Here is what some parents have said

- *I wondered if I had been a bad parent*
- *We were afraid to tell our family and friends in case they stopped loving our child, or condemned us.*
- *He knew from the time he was about 13, that he was not interested in girls.*
- *In front of the class, the teacher called my child a 'poof'*
- *My church teaches that homosexuals are evil. But it is hard for me to regard my lovely daughter as bad.*
- *A friend assumed that my son was a paedophile.*
- *If only we had this kind of group years ago!*

A WAY FORWARD

Gay people often experience social, political and economic oppression. In many communities prejudice which still makes it difficult for them to live openly or with dignity, also affects the well-being of their families.

With support and understanding many parents are able to put aside their fears and by working through the difficulties, come to a closer relationship with their children. Families often find that they are enriched by the experience.

PFLAG members regard their gay sons and daughters, or family members and friends with love and pride

We offer the community our experience and support.

THE WAY WE ARE

Heterosexual people experience a rich variety of ways they live and love as men and women. Amongst gay and lesbian people there is a similar rich diversity. Because sexuality is so personal, it can be an uncomfortable subject for some people.

PERSONAL BELIEFS

Each of us is formed by the beliefs of our family, by the attitudes of society and possibly by the religious group to which we belong.

There are many myths about homosexuality and bisexuality, which are easy to accept without questioning whether they are true.

Some myths blame parents for their child's sexual orientation. Others suggest that homosexuality is a mental disease, or that all gay people are promiscuous, or have chosen to be gay, and can therefore change. Hatred or fear of homosexuals is called *HOMOPHOBIA*

Young people who have grown up amongst such beliefs and then realise they are gay, usually fear that they will be rejected by family and friends, and will be outcasts from the community. It takes courage to *COME OUT* i.e. risk telling their families and friends that they are gay.

The *LOVE AND SUPPORT* of their parents and those closest to them is vital so that they can develop a sense of their own worth.

To Contact PFLAG South

Cell Phone 027, 6869.304

Email enquiries@pflag.org.nz

Mail PO Box 5266 Dunedin

Website www.pflag.org.nz

***Books, available from the
Dunedin Public Library***

Stewart Terry (1993) **“Invisible Families”**
Highly recommended for New Zealand
Parents. Auckland New Women’s press.

Griffith, Carolyn Welch et al (1996)
“Beyond Acceptance” Parents of Lesbians and
Gays Talk about their Experience”
St Martins Press

Rafkin, Louise (1987) **“Different Daughters”**
A book by mothers of lesbians. Pittsburgh
Pennsylvania, Cleirs

Cohen, Susan and Daniel (1989) **“When Someone
You Know is Gay”** Dell.

Forman-Dew, Robb (1994) **“The Family Heart”**
-A Memoir of When our Son Came Out”
Addison-Wesley

Singer B (Ed) (1993) **“Growing Up Gay”** A Literary
Anthology. New York. The New Press.

Bass E and Kaufman K (1996) **(Free Your Mind”**
the book for gay lesbian and bisexual Youth and
their allies. Harper –Collins

Borthek, Mary (1993) **:Coming Out to Your
Parents”** Pilgrim Press

**Check the library computer for other titles or go
to the 306 section on the first floor. Library staff
can also provide a booklist “The Word is Out”**

SEND FOR THESE LEAFLETS

Or download them from the website

A Guide for Families
Of Lesbian and Gay People

Parents Stories

Frequently Asked questions About
Homosexuality

When You Think You Might Be
Bisexual Lesbian or Gay

Coming Out to Your Parents

If I Know Someone Who is Gay or
Lesbian, What Can I Do?

Homosexuality as a Religious Issue

Tips for Professionals Who Work With
Gay Youth

“Be Yourself”
(Questions and Answers for Gay and
Lesbian Youth)

**Tick the ones you want Send a
stamped, self addressed envelope to:
PO Box 5266 Dunedin**

A FEAR THAT CHANGES FAMILIES

*WHAT YOU NEED
TO KNOW*



PFLAG South

Parents, Families, and Friends
Of Lesbians and Gays

**Keeping Families Together
Support – Education
Advocacy**

