

Gay Men

Researched by

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Spring 2003

I. Demographics

- Men who call themselves gay are sexually attracted to and fall in love with other men. Sexual feelings toward men are normal and natural to them.
- Specific statistics on the percentage of gay men in Maine are hard to find. This is due to the fact that sexuality is not something that people have to disclose about themselves. Homosexuality does not discriminate based on race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin or age.
- Nationwide it is estimated that 10% of the U.S. male population is gay.

II. Living Arrangements

- 2000 Census reveals that same-sex couples live in 99.3 percent of all counties in America.
- Portland, Falmouth, and Bangor are three of eleven towns in Maine that have a provision that prevents housing discrimination for gay couples.
- Maine alone does not have a statewide law that prevents housing discrimination.
- Gay men live in a variety of settings for example:
 - With other male partners
 - By themselves
 - With their immediate families, which may include wife and children

III. Roles/Support System

- Father
 - Research has shown that children of gay and lesbian parents do not significantly differ from those of heterosexual parents with regard to gender identity, psychosocial development, and prevalence of homosexuality.
 - Gay fathers face the decision of how “out” to be for fear of their children’s rejection.
 - Gay parents often seek counseling for help in telling their children that they are homosexual.
- Son
 - Some fathers push their gay sons away because the fathers are angry and uncomfortable with their sons’ need for closeness.
 - This can result in social and emotional distance for a gay son and his father.
- Friend
 - Gay men tend to have more female friends than male because they have developed interests and feelings more associated with females.
- Boyfriend/Life Partner
 - Being a boyfriend/life partner provides a safe and accepting environment.

IV. Leisure/Play

There are many clubs and organizations in Maine that are gay friendly and embrace people of the gay community.

- **Clubs/Bars**
- Lewiston
 - Sportsman's Athletic Club
- Augusta
 - Papa Joes
 - PJ's Lounge
- Ogunquit
 - The Club
 - The Front Porch
- Bangor
 - Spectrum
- Portland
 - Blackstone's
 - Cosmos
 - Raoul's Roadside Attraction
 - Somewhere Café
 - Underground
 - Zootz
- **Entertainment**
 - The Maine Gay Men's Chorus
 - Portland Museum of Art
 - Booth Theater
 - Ogunquit Playhouse
 - Portland Opera Repertory Theater
 - Portland Stage Company

***(see resources for addresses)**

V. Legal Concerns

- Non-Discrimination Laws
 - No provision of Maine Law addresses discrimination based on sexual orientation. The Maine Human Rights law extends only to discrimination based on "race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, age, physical handicap or mental handicap."
 - No provision of Maine law explicitly addresses gender identity-based discrimination.
- Safe Schools Law
 - Maine law does not have an explicit provision that addresses school safety on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Couples/Partners Laws
 - Maine has an express statutory prohibition against same-sex marriage. "Persons of the same sex may not contract marriage."

- No provisions of Maine law address civil unions. Maine does not license civil unions.
- Maine law chooses not to recognize same-sex marriages celebrated in another jurisdiction.
- Maine law mandates the availability of domestic partner benefits to state employees.
- Hate Crimes Law
 - Maine's hate crimes law explicitly addresses sexual orientation.
 - Maine hate crimes law does not explicitly address gender-identity based violence.
 - Many gay "hate crimes" go unreported, due to fear of further discrimination, shame, intimidation by police and similar concerns.
- Sodomy Law
 - The Maine sodomy law was repealed in 1976.
- Parenting Laws
 - Maine law is not clear about adoption by gay and lesbian individuals.

VI. Health Concerns

- Anyone can have health problems, regardless of sexual orientation. The following is a list of more common health problems found among gay men.
- Gonorrhea
 - The rate of gonorrhea has recently begun to rise among gay men.
- Genital/anal warts
 - Genital warts on the penis are common in both heterosexual and gay men. However, anal warts tend to occur more frequently in gay men.
- Hepatitis A
 - Sexually, the disease is spread by oral-anal sexual contact.
 - There is now a very effective vaccine to prevent infection. Unfortunately, despite the higher rates of hepatitis A infection among gay men, most members of the gay community are unaware of the vaccine.
- Hepatitis B
 - This disease is transmitted the same way as HIV, but is much more infectious.
 - In Western nations, sexually transmitted hepatitis B tends to occur more commonly among gay men.
 - There is a very effective vaccine to prevent infection.
- HIV/AIDS
 - Worldwide, most of the people infected with HIV and AIDS are heterosexuals.
 - In developed nations such as North America and Western Europe most cases continue to be transmitted sexually between men.
 - In the United States most cases of recent HIV infection continue to be among gay men.
 - 69% of all male HIV infections in Maine are men having sex with men.

- Cancer
 - Gay men are at a higher risk of liver cancer because of the increased risk of hepatitis B infection, which is linked to liver cancer.
 - Anal cancer occurs more commonly in men with damaged immune systems, which occurs with the contraction of HIV.
- Domestic Violence
 - Domestic violence is very rarely reported due to lack of services for male victims of domestic violence, fears of discrimination, and fear of intimidation by police.
- Mental Health
 - Many gay men suffer from depression and low self-esteem.
 - Gay men are often abandoned by their families.
 - Discrimination against gays continues to be common.
 - Society does not treat gay men well, which contributes to their low self-esteem.
 - Suicide rates among gay youth are higher than heterosexual youth.

VII. Challenges to Health Care

- Gay men may not seek health care for fear of discrimination, or because of a previous experience of discrimination in the health care setting.
- Disclosing information about sexuality is anxiety provoking.
- During visits with a health care provider a client may withhold sensitive, yet important information for fear of discrimination.
- Non-recognition of gay partners by the medical profession during health crisis and hospitalization.
- Some health professionals demonstrate either homophobia (fear of homosexuals) or heterosexism (the value of heterosexuals over homosexuals) when treating gay men.

VIII. Tips for Culturally Competent Care

- An individual clinician or practice cannot meet every need of gay-identified patients, but developing a list of resources available in the local community will facilitate comprehensive and quality care for all patients.
- In order to gain trust from your clients, you will need to create an atmosphere of openness and affirmation with all patients.
- One must be sensitive to the gay subculture and to the subcultural changes.
- Be sensitive to your verbal and body language to create an atmosphere of care, openness and non-judgment.
- If a patient seems offended by something you have said, you should simply apologize and ask what terminology the patient prefers.
- Ensure that all the questions you must ask are open-ended and apply to all patients.
- Encourage use of the word “partner” rather than “spouse” as not to make the assumption one is married.

- Explain how the patient's confidentiality will be protected and who will have access to the information.
- Displaying posters or pamphlets with gay-friendly or gay positive messages are ways to demonstrate a welcoming attitude.
- Consider posting non-discrimination statement that reassure patients that you do not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, language, or disability. This will go a long way towards making gay patients feel more comfortable.
- Attend training sessions to increase awareness of the homosexual culture.
- Expect to make mistakes in "good faith" and be willing to learn from those mistakes.

Resources

Augusta

Papa Joe's
80 Water St.

207-623-4041

PJ's Lounge
80 Water St.
207-623-4041

Bangor

Spectrum
190 Harlow St.
207-942-3000

Lewiston

Sportsman's Athletic Club
2 Bates St.
207-784-2251

Ogunquit

Booth Theater
5 Beach St.
207-646-8142

The Club
13 Main St.
207-646-6655

The Front Porch
Ogunquit Square
207-646-4005

Main Street Video Bar Cabaret
131 South Main St.
207-646-5101

Ogunquit Playhouse
P.O. Box 915
Ogunquit, Maine 03907
207-646-5541

Portland

Blackstones
6 Pine St.
207-775-2885

Cosmos
117 Spring St.
207-774-9262

The Maine Gay Men's Chorus
P.O. Box 10391
207-772-1384

Portland Museum of Art
Seven Congress Square
207-775-6148

Portland Opera Repertory Theater
P.O. Box 7733
Portland, Maine 04112
207-879-7678

Portland Stage Company
25A Forest Ave.
Portland, Maine 04104
207-774-0465

Raoul's Roadside Attraction
865 Forest Ave.
207-773-6886

Somewhere Café
117 Spring St.
207-871-9169

Underground
3 Spring St.
207-773-3351

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