

Lesbianism

Do you think of a strange looking woman driving a truck and smoking a cigar? Or a poor, pitiful, tortured creature who couldn't get a man and so turned to women as second best? Does thinking about lesbians make you uncomfortable? Scared? Angry?

Most people's ideas about lesbians come from jokes and rumours. Most people would say they don't know any lesbians...but they would say that lesbians are man-hating, aggressive, promiscuous, and molest young girls. These are old ideas based on ignorance and fear.

What is the Truth About Lesbianism?

A lesbian is a woman who loves other women. She prefers to create her intimate and loving relationships with other women. Other than that, lesbians are as unique and diverse as all women.

Lesbians come from a variety of backgrounds, work in every conceivable occupation, have different political beliefs, and lifestyles. Lesbians are mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, neighbours, co-workers, cousins, aunts, grandmothers...

Lesbians are found everywhere. We form a significant percentage of the population. We live full, rich, rewarding, productive lives.

Isn't Lesbianism Unnatural?

No. Studies of human development show that people are not just naturally heterosexual. We are naturally loving, and naturally sexual. We are, in fact, taught to be heterosexual.

But Don't Lesbians Molest Young Girls?

No. Statistics show that 95% of all cases of sexual abuse of children involve heterosexual men and girls.

So Why Don't I Know Any Lesbians?

Partly because you really can't tell by looking who is a lesbian. And partly because, until very recently, almost all lesbians were very careful to hide the fact that they loved women. Lesbians have been rejected by families and friends, fired from their jobs, locked up in mental hospitals, lost their children, been beaten up--when someone else 'found out'. With that kind of punishment waiting, most lesbians lived their lives pretending to be heterosexual.

Why Are We Talking About This?

Lesbians are no longer willing to lie and hide and live in fear. Lesbians are working together to educate people about lesbianism to dispel the ignorance and lies. We have set up drop-ins and support groups. We are producing positive material that celebrates loving women. We are active in the Women's Liberation Movement as part of our struggle for respect and value for all women. We are active in trade unions, gay rights groups, community groups... everywhere....

But there's such a long way to go. There is still so much fear and prejudice. There are still many women who worry that there's 'something wrong' with loving another woman. There are lesbians living in isolation and loneliness. Lesbian mothers are still being denied custody of their children. Lesbians are still being fired from their jobs, and being harassed on the street. It has to stop....

What Can I Do?

- Educate yourself. Get your local library or bookstore to order some good factual books on lesbianism. Read them, and then pass them on.
- Talk with your friends, your co-workers and children about lesbianism. Ask that groups you belong to invite speakers from lesbian organizations.
- Speak out when someone tells a 'queer' joke. They're not funny.
- Work to change the B.C. Human Rights Code to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
- There are groups and resources in B.C. working for lesbian rights. Offer your support.