

MYTH BUSTING THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

A resource developed by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues

Myth: LGBTQ+ people are very rare

FACT:

LGBTQ+ people are actually quite common, with an estimated 10% of people identifying in some way as LGBTQ+. That means odds are someone you know could be gay, bisexual, trans, asexual, and on and on. They may just may not feel comfortable, ready, or feel the need to come out.

Myth: LGBTQ+ people have chosen to be gay and or transgender

FACT:

Being LGBTQ+ is not a choice, nor is it caused by peer pressure, poor parenting or trauma. It most likely results from outside factors such as genetics or in the early stages of brain development. Someone can no more choose to be gay than choose to be straight. It is simply brain chemistry, and a natural part of them.

Myth: People turn out gay as a result of childhood trauma or because of a lack of good parental role models

FACT:

There is no evidence that exists that links sexual orientation or identity with trauma or a lack of good parenting. Sexual abuse, in particular, is what is considered to be to blame and it has been found that it is not more prevalent amongst LGBTQ+ people than it is amongst heterosexual people.

Myth: LGBTQ+ people only ever have to come out once

FACT:

LGBTQ+ people actually have to come out continuously throughout their lives. Telling one person or one group of people does not mean that everyone now knows automatically. Coming out occurs in almost every single new social situation and group of people. It becomes a continuous life long process of coming out.

Myth: LGBTQ+ people are worse parents and more likely to cause harm to a child or children

FACT:

Evidence shows that a child who grows up with an LGBTQ+ parent or LGBTQ+ parents will fare just as well as those children who grow up with heterosexual parents. In fact, in some instances, it has been found that children in same-sex households are better adjusted than those who are not, with studies showing that these children may be healthier and have better family cohesion.

Myth: Pedophiles are more likely to be gay men

FACT:

The idea that gay men are more likely to be pedophiles has been a pervasive and damaging myth about the LGBTQ+ community. However, this myth is false. It has been shown that gay men are not more likely to molest a child than a heterosexual man and in fact, the majority of pedophiles are men married to women who prey on children within their social circle.

Myth: Gay men are always feminine and lesbians are always masculine or "butch"

FACT:

Some gay men may be feminine and some lesbians may be masculine but this is simply their choice or personality. It does not mean that every single gay man and lesbian conforms to this, and the people who do are just expressing themselves, which is unrelated to sexuality.

Myth: You can "spot" lesbian, gay man, or trans-identified person based off of specific mannerisms, clothing choices or physical characteristics

FACT:

LGBTQ+ people are just as unique and individualistic as cisgender and straight people. There may be some who conform to the stereotypes and typical images associated with LGBTQ+ identities, but many others look nothing like those stereotypical images. In fact, some of the most stereotypical images associated with the LGBTQ+ community such as the effeminate man or tomboy are found equally as much amongst those who are not LGBTQ+.

Myth: A bisexual person is someone who can't make up their mind about whether or not they are straight or gay

FACT:

Bisexuals are not just confused or can't decide. They experience genuine attraction towards both people of their own gender and other genders and they do not have to choose whether they're gay or straight.

Myth: Bisexual people like both genders equal amounts

FACT:

The idea that all bisexual people like both genders equally is actually not true. It is extremely common for someone who is bisexual to prefer one gender over another and for that preference to fluctuate over time.

Myth: Someone who is bisexual or pansexual is more likely to engage sexual activity or be promiscuous than any other sexuality

FACT:

Someone who is bisexual or pansexual is not more promiscuous than anyone else. Some may enjoy sex quite a bit, others may not. There is nothing inherent about their sexuality that automatically means that they are willing to sleep with anyone. The only reason why someone who is bisexual may be engaging in more relationships is that there are more potential partners available.

Myth: Being transgender is just a recent thing

FACT:

Trans people have existed for thousands of years across a diverse range of cultures and the perception that there are more trans people now can be explained in a few ways. 1. It is safer for a trans person so be out, 2. Public awareness of trans people have increased, 3. The internet and social media can highlight and showcase trans people and 4. There are simply more people than ever, thus more trans people.

Myth: Transgender people are unnatural and what we are assigned at birth is our real and correct gender

FACT:

The gender that someone identifies with is independent from their sex. Someone's biological sex generally refers to the sex characteristics that one had at birth, such as type of gonads, and internal and external genitalia. Gender is an internal sense one has about themselves and the social role they inhabit. Sex and gender are two separate things. A trans person is not unnatural as a person's sex does not determine their gender and a person is allowed to identify in the way that makes them feel most comfortable.

Myth: Transgender people are just confused or mistaken about what gender identity they identify as

FACT:

A trans person is not confused about their identity by identifying differently than the gender they were assigned at birth. Their identity as a man, woman or non-binary person has been a part of them from the start and they have not been influenced by outside factors to "become" this. They may feel more comfortable coming out because of outside factors but those did not make them trans. As well a person may struggle with their identity and may change how they identify but that does not mean trans people are merely confused men or women who are just going to change their identity "back to normal" soon.

Myth: Letting trans people use the bathroom or locker room matching their gender identity is dangerous

FACT:

There is not a single piece of evidence that could support this claim. Not a single trans person has ever used a bathroom or changing room as an opportunity to assault cisgender people. Trans people are actually more likely to be the victims of violence in change rooms/bathrooms than cisgender people are.

Myth: Being transgender is just a fetish or kink

FACT:

Partially due to media presentation, there exists the myth that being trans is a fetish or all sexual. This myth is wrong. Being trans is related to one's identity, not what they may enjoy sexually. That is entirely unrelated. As well being trans is something that is a part of you and affects every aspect of your life, rather than an activity to be enjoyed under certain circumstances.

Myth: There are only trans women, not trans men

FACT:

Trans men do exist and are far more common than believed. Partially due to trans women being more likely to medically transition, the statistics have been skewed away from the fact that there is an equal amount of trans men and trans women.

Myth: Trans people always want to or are going to get surgery

FACT:

Being trans doesn't mean that someone will undergo medical transition or would want to. For some trans people hormone therapy or surgeries would be the right choice, but not for all. Some may choose to simply change their name, come out to others and dress differently. It's up to an individual and their preferences.

Myth: A person can only identify as male or female

FACT:

A person's gender is not simply limited to male and female or man and woman. Gender exists along a spectrum and someone's identity can be in between male and female. These people are non-binary or genderqueer and their identity is entirely valid and acceptable.

Myth: It's ok to call someone who is LGBTQ+ a dyke, queer or fag

FACT:

While the word "queer" is in the process of being reclaimed, that doesn't mean that it's not still offensive towards the LGBTQ+ community. It is still used daily as a slur against the LGBTQ+ community and many have a history of having it directed at them. As well simply because one word is being reclaimed does not mean the other slurs are also reclaimed. Do not call anyone a dyke, fag or another slur.