

HOW CAN LGBQ PEOPLE HAVE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

Relationships of all types can be healthy or unhealthy. The sexual preferences and genders of those in the relationship do not change the needs for relationship to be respectful.

WHAT DOES A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP LOOK LIKE?

Healthy relationships involve mutual respect, equal power and a commitment to communication and compromise. Healthy relationships NEVER involve coercion or threats to get one's own way, using money to control the other partner, isolating a partner, using intimidation or put downs on a partner, and refusing to take responsibilities for these abusive behaviours.

Healthy relationships can be recognized when both people can make their own choices and hold their own view without fear or concern, they feel safe and understood, heard and accepted, "No" is accepted as an answer, neither partner feels coerced or controlled, and honesty and trust are nurtured.

CHRISTIAN VIEW

Christianity encompasses a wide variety of views, and views of sexuality can be particularly divisive. This is a Uniting Church resource and holds the view that sexuality is part of God's gift to humanity, and is not something to be frightened of. All human beings are driven to relate to others, as seen in the creation stories in Genesis, and God is present in every interaction between people.

The term "safe sex" does not then just apply to protecting oneself against sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, but also engaging in sexual activity in a respectful and ethical way.

HEALTHY SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

The law says that before any sexual activity can take place, both partners need to say yes to sex (and specific sexual acts), and to agree to this "freely and willingly" – meaning they can not be bullied into it, or otherwise coerced. Here are some questions you might consider asking yourself and your partner to ensure what you are doing is ethical:

Will this sexual interaction enhance this relationship?

Is this what I want / what I like / what feels good?

Are we taking steps to protect ourselves?

Is this what the other person wants/ enjoys/ how do I know, have I asked?

Do I feel comfortable asking for what I want or saying no if I am not enjoying what is happening?

Christian GLBQ people might like to ask questions like the following one:

'How can our actions in this situation best reflect the love, faithfulness and grace of God that is expressed in Jesus Christ and reflected in us?'

If all these questions are asked, chances of sexual assault, unwanted and unethical sex reduces, and your chance of enjoyable, fun and safe sex increases.

SUMMARY

The gender and sexuality of a couple does not determine if their relationship is healthy.

Healthy relationships are built on respect, listening, compromise NEVER on coercion, threats or bullying.

Sexuality is a gift from God, and can be ethical if both parties care for themselves, and the other person present.

SOME RESOURCES

Kid's Helpline resource on Respectful Relationships
kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-info/hot-topics/respectful-relationships.php

Sexual ethics website:
sexualethics.org.au

Uniting Sexuality & Faith;
unitingjustice.org.au/images/pdfs/issues/community/resources/unitingsexualityandfaith.pdf

* taken from the National Christian Youth Convention '09 handbook.
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