**What is LGBQ?**

LGBQ stands for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Queer. LGBQ is a term used to refer to the community formed by these diverse identities that are joined together because of their shared oppression under heterosexism, homophobia, and sexism. LGBQ people are represented in every socioeconomic class, education level, political affiliation, age group, religion, race and ethnicity.

**How many people are LGBQ?**

A variety of studies have estimated anywhere from 3-13% of the population is exclusively homosexual. However, even the most reputable estimates are inaccurate due to the fact that many people are afraid or unwilling to be identified as gay or lesbian, even in anonymous surveys. Also, those estimates do not include people who identify as bisexual, queer, or have fluid sexualities.

**What causes a person to be LGBQ?**

There are numerous theories about the origins of a person’s sexual orientation: most scientists today agree that sexual orientation is most likely the result of a complex interaction of environmental, cognitive and biological factors.

**When do LGBQ people first know?**

There is no set age at which people become aware that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer. Some LGBQ people become aware of their orientation during adolescence. Some say that they have known for as long as they can remember. People can realize their sexual orientation at any point during their lives. Most people’s sexuality and sexual orientation shifts and changes throughout their lives.

**Can LGBQ people be good parents?**

Yes. Studies comparing groups of children raised by homosexual and by heterosexual parents find no developmental differences between the two groups of children in four critical areas: their intelligence, psychological adjustment, social adjustment and popularity with friends. Some people assume that LGBQ parents will make their children “gay,” but research has shown that their children are no more likely to become LGBQ than children of heterosexual parents.

**Do all GBQ men have AIDS?**

No. This is a commonly held myth. In reality, the risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS is related to a person’s behavior, not their sexual orientation. HIV/AIDS can be protected against by practicing safer sex and not sharing needles.
What is the difference between sexual orientation, gender identity and sex?

Why do I sometimes see the letters LGBTIQ together?

Sexual orientation refers to who you are attracted to and the category that you identify that desire as (some examples are lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, queer, etc.). Gender identity refers to one’s sense of one’s own gendered identity (some examples include woman, bi-gendered, man, two-spirit, transgendered, etc.). Sex refers to one’s biology (some examples include female, intersex, male, etc.). The I and Q in LGBTIQ stand for “intersex” and “Transgender.” For more info, see GenEq’s Transgender, Intersex, and Gender/Sex Info Sheets.

How can I be respectful of LGBQ people?

• Educate yourself further about LGBQ people and issues important to LGBQ communities.
• It is important to avoid making assumptions about the sexual orientation of others, or asking questions about their sexual behavior.
• Seek awareness of your sexual orientation and the things you may have always taken for granted about it, particularly if you’ve always considered yours to be “the norm”. (See GenEq’s Heterosexuality Questionnaire)
• Respect the confidentiality of LGBQ people. Seek the consent of an individual before revealing their sexual orientation to others - you could be “outing” them to a person or community does not know that they are LGBQ.

Why should people be informed about LGBTIQ issues?

Becoming informed about LGBTIQ issues helps reduce heterosexism, homophobia, sexism, genderism, and transphobia. This makes it easier for everyone to live a more open and productive life in their work and home communities. The culture as a whole is therefore enriched. For LGBTIQ youth, who are more likely to experience depression and rejection by friends and/or family, acceptance and understanding could be a matter of life or death.

Where can I find more information?

• Most libraries have extensive sections dedicated to LGBQ communities, histories, and issues.
• Search out your local LGBTIQ center and inquire about what they are working on regarding LGBQ issues in your area, ask them questions, and use their resources.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Programs and Services
Gender Equity Resource Center
202 Cesar Chavez
http://geneq.berkeley.edu
(look for LGBT Programs & Services)

Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC)
Community center for LGBTIQ youth
(415) 703-6150
www.lyric.org

Pacific Center (Berkeley)
(510) 548-8283
2712 Telegraph Avenue
www.pacificcenter.org

San Francisco LGBT Center
(415) 865-5555
1800 Market Street
www.sfcenter.org

Bisexual Resource Center
www.biresource.org

Lesbian.org
www.lesbian.org

Human Rights Campaign
www.hrc.org

GenEq is a department within The Division of Equity & Inclusion, http://diversity.berkeley.edu.