



# Heterosexism & Heteronormativity

**Heterosexism** is the assumption that all people are heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is the superior sexual orientation.

**Heteronormativity** is the social setting that assumes heterosexuality to be the “normal” sexual orientation, and homosexuality and bisexuality are a “deviation” (hence the term “straight” to refer to heterosexual people).

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## *Heterosexuality in Perspective*

- What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
- When and where did you first decide that you were a heterosexual?
- Is it possible that your heterosexuality is just a phase you might grow out of?
- If you have never slept with someone of the same sex and enjoyed it, is it possible that all you need is a good gay lover?
- To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
- Why do heterosexuals seem so compelled to seduce others into their lifestyle?
- Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be who are and keep it quiet?
- With so many child molesters being heterosexual, do you feel safe exposing your child to heterosexual teachers?
- Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?

## ***Heterosexual Privileges***

As a heterosexual, I am privileged in the following ways:

- To be able to walk across campus holding my girlfriend's or boyfriend's hand without fear.
- To join a sorority or fraternity without fear of being rejected based on my sexual identity.
- To be able to talk freely about my "relationships" with my roommates, friends, and family.
- To play varsity sports without the fear of being removed from the team because of my sexual identity.
- To walk into any bar or dance with my partner without fear of being verbally or physically abused.
- To interview for jobs and be able to discuss my plans for marriage without fear of being discriminated against.
- To run for a student leadership position without students focusing only on my sexual identity.
- To walk this campus without fear of physical or verbal harm based solely on my sexual identity.

As a heterosexual, I am privileged that I am a member of the dominant culture and I MAY CHOOSE TO BE AN ALLY for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students.