

The prism of homosexuality; and all its colorful aspects

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The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer.

..(LGBTQ+) community has been fighting for equal rights since the 1970's even though homosexuality has been around since before biblical times. In the United States, same-sex marriage was legalized on June 26, 2015. Before it was legalized in all 50 states, marriage equality was considered "States rights" and it was up to the states to decide whether they wanted to prohibit or legalize it. Everyone should have the choice to legally marry who they love without discrimination from religious radicals and homophobes.

The discrimination that took place in the 19th and 20th centuries everyone was made to believe that homosexuality was a mental disorder. "In the nineteenth century, the term homosexual was listed as a sexual aberration to explain the behavior of criminals charged with sex crimes. In 1952, homosexuality was listed as a mental disorder" (Homosexuality). In 1973 the members of American Psychological Association (APA) voted on whether they believed if homosexuality is a mental disorder and if it should stay on the list of American classified mental disorders. There were 9,664 members who voted, 5,854 members voted to remove it and 3,810 members voted to keep it.

The result of the vote, the APA voted to remove it and replace it with Sexual Orientation Disturbance. In other words, sexual and gender identity is more of a physiological problem because it relates to how it affects the brain.

According to a study by Savic and Lindstrom, there are indications that homosexual and heterosexual men and women have resemblance with their cerebrum of the brain. "Lesbians and straight men have similar brain

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structures and functionalities while gay men and straight women share neural characteristics" (Homosexuality in the brain). In other parts of the world, such as Eastern and Western Europe homosexuality is accepted.

A statistic from showing percentages of people in every continent on whether they think if homosexuality should be accepted or not. In the European Union, the percentages of people thinking homosexuality should be accepted is higher than any other continent, meanwhile, Africa has the lowest rate. Which would explain the radical punishments in areas like Africa, Asia and the Middle East, where homosexuality is still illegal, and homosexuals can be put into prison for loving who they love. For example, in Yemen, Nigeria, and Iran homosexuals are executed. The 21st century was a historic time for gay rights in the United States. The United StatesSupremecourt ruled 5-4 that states couldn't ban same-sex marriage and LGBTQ+ couples have the fundamental right to marry whoever they love in all 50 states. Even though there is still a lot of discrimination throughout the world, its why the LGBTQ+ community is very important. Because, the community is a place where LGBTQ+ can find acceptance, support and love. It's also a place where youth who are struggling can find help they need. The sad reality of it all is that the LGBTQ+ community's presence is absent in many areas of the world, which has a detrimental effect on the youth. For example, there was a boy who was gay and closeted.

He came out to his closest friends, the next day those so called friends decided to spread rumors about his sexual orientation without the boys knowledge. That secret was meant to be kept between his friends and him,

but they betrayed his trust, stripped him of his dignity, left him vulnerable and susceptible to hate. It left him feeling so ashamed for who he was, which led to depression and suicidal thoughts. On October 27, 2014 he decided to end his life. That boy and other LGBTQ+ youth has ended their life because of all the bigotry surrounding homosexuality. The result of that single act for his loved ones is pain, shock, anger and sadness.

But now, there is a climate of acceptance, support, and love instead of suicide being the only option. The positivity that comes from the community has lifted millions of people all around the world. Everyday there are kids being bullied because of who they are. Adults who are openly LGBTQ+ are being assaulted or harassed by homophobes and like-minded people on the streets. People who are suffering from discrimination need the LGBTQ+ community.

Homosexuality is found in more than 1500 species, homophobia is found in only one; humans. People just want to love who they want without being discriminated for it, they want equal rights just like any other creature on earth. We need the positivity from the LGBTQ+ community because the most mainstream religious leaders teach other people marriage is only between a man and a woman, and they should also follow that dogma as well. Their teachings persuade people why same-sex marriage should not be legally recognized. Mainstream religious leaders teach others that marriage equality is wrong because marriage was traditionally defined between one man and one woman.

A pro and con article about marriage equality said, “ The tradition until recently has been adopted by all governments and major religions of the world”(Gay Marriage ProCon). There’s not only religious leaders but also religious parents who send their LGBTQ+ children to conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is a type of therapy that tries to change one’s sexual orientation or gender, it’s also called Reparative Therapy, Ex-Gay Therapy, and Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE). Mental health professionals use extreme measures to cure homosexual urges like showing homoerotic images while providing electric shocks or inducing paralysis and nausea, having an elastic band around their wrist so when the patient is aroused by homoerotic images they pull on the elastic; thus, making the patient’s behavior more masculine or feminine and practice all those techniques teaching the patient homosexuality therefore, is a sin and a defect or disorder. A former conversion therapy patient, Mathew Shurka said “ I never met a single conversion therapy patient that entered conversion therapy as an adult who actually became a heterosexual”(How Conversion Therapy Affects Your Mental Health).

Mathew Shurka was in conversion therapy for 5 years and contemplated suicide a lot. He also knew friends that attempted or completed suicide. Mental health professionals and religious leaders thought that homosexuality was caused by childhood trauma, but Mathew couldn’t find any childhood trauma that would’ve made him homosexual. In fact, he said that his teenage-self started looking and digging up problems that didn’t even exist, and it turned out to be severe anxiety. Conversion therapy is a problem because only eleven of the United States has banned the practice which

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leaves the other 39 states leaving it legalized. Although, there is no scientific evidence that shows conversion therapy works or is harmful, but reading former conversion therapy patient survivor stories, they all had a negative experience.

It's very unlikely and unsuccessful to even change one's sexual orientation or gender through that type of therapy. Even though you can't change someone's sexual orientation or gender, there are people who still oppose homosexuality because it's against their religion and beliefs. Others believe that homosexuality shown in public or television is bad for children because they're too young to understand. For example, two gay men walking hand in hand in public is confusing children. Parents main concern about their children around homosexuality is what if their child becomes gay but, children can't "become" gay and there is no harm with children being around homosexuality. Some people think that since homosexuals can't reproduce, it will end human population.

But, homosexuality is important because there are children who need parents. When a homosexual couple get married and want kids, they can't have kids of their own so, they have an option to adopt or lesbians have the choice to get inseminated and gays can have surrogate mothers.

Homosexual parents could adopt the child and raise it since they aren't able to reproduce. Heterosexual parents usually don't adopt because they're busy reproducing and raising their own families. In conclusion, I hope one day everyone will have the right to marry the person they love anywhere in the

world. In order for that to happen, we will need to educate ourselves and become aware of the LGBTQ+ community.

To prevent discrimination from happening inside school walls, schools will need to recognize the community in a positive way. It will make every student feel more welcome at school; it can also create a more positive environment for students. Talk to your counselor about recognizing LGBTQ+ youth and the community. Showing your support for the community can help make a positive difference, it can even save a life.