

The Big 5 Do's and Don'ts of Interacting with LGBT Individuals

1. Don't assume that everyone is either homosexual or heterosexual. **Do** assume that attraction falls along a continuum for everyone and can vary over time.

2. Don't assume that a lesbian, gay, or bisexual person's sexuality is the most important aspect of that person. **Do** assume everyone is a multi-faceted individual for whom sexuality is one aspect of their life among many.

3. Don't assume that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is the cause of a problem in the person's life. **Do** assume that gay, lesbian, and bisexual people have the same problems as everyone else. They are just as likely to be well adjusted and just as likely to have difficulty coping with stress in their lives. Because of discrimination, however, they may have to deal with particular stresses.

4. Don't assume that being gay in our society is so hard and presents so many problems that you should feel sorry for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and/or assume that they would all prefer to be heterosexual. **Do** assume that a same-sex erotic and romantic orientation is as legitimate as an opposite-sex attraction.

5. Don't assume that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual "doesn't matter". "They are the same as everyone else, and I treat everyone the same." **Do** assume the experience of being gay, lesbian, or bisexual in a homophobic and heterosexist society has a profound effect on how that person views themselves and how they experience the world.