

DISCOVERING MY PASSION AS AN ALLY:
GAINING AWARENESS OF THE HISTORY OF THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

A Synthesis Project Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

DISCOVERING MY PASSION AS AN ALLY: GAINING AWARENESS OF THE HISTORY OF THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

June 2012

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Forty years have passed since the civil rights movements in the 1960s and 70s, and even with significant social and political strides made for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) communities, some parts of life look and feel the same. The negative effects of homophobia still reign large and can be seen in state and national policies and through the harassment and violence towards LGBT youth. As a heterosexual, I want to know the best ways I can support and advocate for LGBT rights, and I wonder if through my privileges as a straight woman, compared to being a homosexual woman, if I am better suited to dispel the terrible myths concerning LGBT lifestyles and history. Two things are certain -- that the history of the LGBT movement follows similar patterns of its brother and sister movements (African-Americans', Women's, Immigrants' Rights) and that a nasty motivation for power allows people to manipulate others into being fearful and hateful towards another group, simply because the other group threatens what they believe to be right and wrong or productive for society. *Not surprisingly, one answer to all of this oppression is achieved by calling attention to the everyday lives of gay and lesbian people; allowing the supposedly unknown known.*

In learning the history of the LGBT movement, I am empowered in knowing the past challenges and successes. But even before diving into the history, I had to start with myself. I

had to reflect on my own biases, assumptions, and attitudes. Reflection was pivotal in opening up to a new perspective. In my development as an ally, I reflected on how a heterosexist society sets out to privilege a very limited view of sexuality and love. Through reflection, I now have a clear sense of the negative impacts of homophobia and the dangers they present to society.

Being an ally is hard. Many times I do feel people's judgment on me for why I care or advocate for an issue that does not pertain to me. But there are things to be done and individual actions that people can take in dismantling homophobia. A personal action I created was a tumblr to highlight and profile LGBT people (living and dead), allies, and organizations. The tumblr is named Just Like Me and U (You) and can be found at:

<http://justlikemeandu.tumblr.com/> . The goal is to raise awareness that the LGBT community has its own defined history, celebrate those who break the mold of heterosexism, as well as to educate young LGBT youth in understanding their history. All of the names of people that appear in bold throughout this paper can be found at Just Like Me and You (U) with photos and short profiles. The idea for me with my tumblr is to leave enough information to ignite some level of curiosity that would allow the viewer to want to go find out more about the person or organization.

To allies, who at times give voice to the voiceless

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Forty years have passed since the civil rights movements in the 1960s and 70s, and even with significant social and political strides made for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities, some parts of life look and feel the same. The negative effects of homophobia still reign large and can be seen in state and national policies and through the harassment and violence towards LGBT youth. As a heterosexual, I want to know the best ways I can support and advocate for LGBT rights, and I wonder if through my privileges as a straight woman, compared to being a homosexual woman, if I am better suited to dispel the terrible myths concerning LGBT lifestyles and history. Two things are certain -- that the history of the LGBT movement follows similar patterns of its brother and sister movements (African-Americans', Women's, Immigrants' Rights) and that a nasty motivation for power allows people to manipulate others into being fearful and hateful towards another group, simply because the other group threatens what they believe to be right and wrong or productive for society. *Not surprisingly, one answer to all of this oppression is achieved by calling attention to the everyday lives of gay and lesbian people; allowing the supposedly unknown known.*

In this paper, I will start by describing my own journey in becoming a passionate ally for the LGBT movement. Then I will move toward providing a historical foundation illustrating how the gay rights movement has tackled periods of challenges and successes; coupled with my own reflections on why the history impacts my development in being an ally and connects with the various elements within critical and creative thinking. Next I will suggest reasons for why homophobia continues to exist today, and lastly my goal is to suggest how people can become allies as well through sharing some of the actions I have implemented in my own life. Throughout the piece I hope to paint a picture of how homophobia continues to leave a negative impact on society.

SECTION I: MY JOURNEY OF BECOMING AN ALLY

So how did a straight girl become so passionate for the LGBT community? When did I realize that my straight voice would be a useful instrument in dismantling homophobic oppression?

Well, as I think back, I am able to see that there have been many instances in my life where I felt love, trust, and friendship from the gay and lesbian community, as well as times when I felt the underserved injustices they feel daily in their lives. One thing running constant throughout all of these times is the fact that I was never taught to think as gay and lesbian people as ‘other’ or people who need to be fixed or changed. My parents most certainly never told me this and fortunately even with my Protestant upbringing, I never witnessed my church community cast out someone who held a queer identity. Because of this foundation, I realize now that my relationships in life and worldviews on equality are based on having a level playing field with people.

My Experiences with LGBT Friends, Part I. The greatest influence in my journey in becoming a straight ally is through the many relationships I have had and currently still have with people in the gay community. Most impactful to me was how many of them disclosed their orientation to me. All of the names of people in this section have been changed in order to preserve confidentiality.

First, there was Mary who told me she was a lesbian when we were sophomores in high school and while we were lying in bed together. Mary was a great friend, who belonged in my camp friends community. Every summer I spent about 6-10 weeks at Christian summer camp in the foothills of the Sierras. She lived a few towns away, so when we would get together during the school year, she would always stay a few days with my family. In our Christian camp group, Mary and I become close through having intimate conversations regarding our views on god, as

well as having fun hiking, swimming, and just hanging out, playing games and being goofy teens. When Mary told me she was a lesbian, I instantly knew she was not teasing and did not know what to expect of me. I remember her saying that she was nervous and afraid how our friends would take the news and that she trusted me. I think as a young high school student I did not know what to think. Mary was still the Mary I knew. She was my friend and she came to me seeking compassion. All I remember doing was giving Mary a hug and saying, “Mary, your secret is safe with me and I’m here for you.”

The second story is John’s. John and I went to college together. During my senior year and John’s junior, we both spent the fall semester studying abroad. I studied in the British Isles and John went to Spain. Both our semesters ended early and both made it back to our respected states (California, me; Oregon, John). Somehow prior to making our way back to Spokane, John and I connected via Facebook. We sent messages back and forth to each other daily. We were modern pen pals sharing our wild and adventurous lives abroad. I was pretty sure that he had a crush on me because I had never experienced a male friendship like this before. When we finally met I realized he was not into me, but more than likely gay. At this point in my life I had seen plenty of images of what homosexual men; unfortunately most of these depictions were negative stereotypes, like Julia Roberts’ best friend George Downes in the movie, *My Best Friend’s Wedding*. It was not until one night when my housemates and I were throwing a party; John and I end up in the large, walk-in closet of a housemate and he told me he was gay. John was the first gay male I knew at my homophobic Christian college. John paved the way for other questioning students to feel comfortable and come out with their sexual preference; sadly, the Trustee Board were not welcoming to the LGBT community and ripped to shreds the school’s Gay Straight Alliance. So John, my roommates and I opened our house to those on campus who needed a

place to go. It was a safe place, off campus. I've been very lucky in my life to always surround myself with kind, loving, and non-judgmental people; once John came out to the rest of my roommates, we all knew what we needed to do.

Finally, there is Tim's story. Tim also went to college with me and was the little brother to one of my roommates. Tim and I were very close during my last two years of college. We hosted a radio show together, took art classes, had sushi every Wednesday night, and loved watching *Arrested Development*. When I moved to Boston, Tim's junior year, we kept in touch by writing back and forth in a journal that Tim had made in a bookmaking class. Before making my way up to Seattle for New Year's that year, Tim called and said he was going to pick me up at the airport and mentioned he wanted to talk with me about something. I do not remember thinking that Tim might be gay; he had always had flings with women while we were in school together. So when he told me, I was pretty shocked. But more than shocked, I felt loved. Tim, like Mary and John, all trusted me with their sexual identity. They knew I was not going to be hateful, disappointed, or weirded out by their coming out. Rather, they knew they would find celebratory excitement from me, like we were celebrating someone's birthday.

How Do Homosexuals Develop Their Identity? Since the 1970s, homosexual identity development has been theorized by scholars. The models of development provide effective interventions and guidance that counselors, parents, and school advisors can use. Used widely is **Vivienne Cass**, 1979 Model of Homosexual Identity Development. In her cycle, a person goes through a variety of stages within their process of coming out as a homosexual. In summarizing the common themes of identity development models, first, the individual acknowledges their sexual preference and the self is realized as homosexual; second, a positive image of this acquisition develops; third, the homosexual begins to tell others, both homosexual and

nonhomosexual; and last, the person begins to have more personalized regular contact with other homosexuals. From Cass a wide range of models have been published, critiqued and utilized, however most of the models lack the ability to assess how one's sexual identity intersects with other majority and minority identities, as well as determining how the identity is formed as a political response. Michele J. Eliason writes in *the Journal of Homosexuality* that:

“The major limitations of sociological and psychological theories of sexual identity formation have been in their narrow focus on sexuality and their ahistorical, apolitical stance... we have identified the need for a more fluid and comprehensive models of development that examine the interrelatedness of various aspects of the individual identity and the role of societal context.” (56)

Even with the flaws within the structure and design of the models, the models have been beneficial in showing the need for research within the field of LGBT studies.

My Experiences with LGBT Friends, Part II. There have also been those friends, gay and straight, that have challenged me in leading a life of an ally. They have called me out when I want to claim hold of my heterosexist assumptions or when I begin to make generalizations regarding the LGBT community. These friends have taught me the significance in being an ally.

I had the pleasure in being Erik's supervisor while he was AmeriCorps* VISTA volunteer. Erik moved to Boston from North Carolina with his partner, Kyle. The first time Erik brought Kyle to campus I was nervous and slightly uncomfortable. I was afraid that people would treat Erik differently after seeing him holding hands with Kyle. I was afraid that there would be a new perception of my office, home to the school's community engagement efforts. But Erik kept bringing Kyle to campus. Erik did not compromise his relationship in order to maintain a certain image. My own partner has never been to my workplace! Erik challenged me

to recognize how my own assumptions were limiting my thinking. He provided the space to dialogue with him, where I was unable to reflect, unpack and digest my own assumptions.

When I first met Becca and Sarah, I was blown away. There was something about the both of them that I wanted to emulate in myself. Both were smart, personable, and gave voices to those who could not speak. Both were allies. When I first moved to Boston, Becca was my VISTA Leader and Sarah was a second year VISTA. It was Becca's task to prepare and plan workshops for us throughout the year. This particular year, Becca set a progressive agenda, focusing on power and privilege, identity development, anti-racism, and institutional oppression tactics. This was my first foray into this work, and I just soaked it up. Becca's workshops were pivotal in my progression in becoming an ally. Becca taught me to question policies to ask why and to help others ask why. Sarah led me to take action. That year Sarah was heavily involved in Boston's Asian American community, particularly in Quincy. Sarah would invite me to different trials where Asian immigrants were being charged with deportation. She would take me to different community events and forums regarding the issue. She taught me that by showing up, by being present and knowledgeable, you support those who are being oppressed, as well as show others that inaction is not a choice. Both women were positive examples of living a life as an ally.

Why are Allies Important? One definition of an ally is a person who belongs to the dominant group, but seeks to distance themselves from the privileges that come with the dominant identity. Allies can be seen across minority identities in society. Roberta Harro's Cycle of Socialization proposes that people move through a cycle when first coming to terms with institutional oppressions in society. This closely mirrors the development of allies. In her article "Ways of Being an Ally to LGB Students" Ellen M. Broido cites Harro's work. Broido says:

“In her (Harro’s) model, as people reflect on the realities of a society organized to enhance the power and privilege of only certain groups, they may become aware of the contradictions inherent in the current system and experience dissonance. This dissonance motivates people to begin a process of consciousness raising, which must happen in collaboration with others who are experiencing the same dissonance. Unlearning the assumptions and stereotypes we have all been taught leads to feelings of anger and guilt, but also to feelings of pride, love, and empowerment as people begin to take action to challenge the system of oppression.” (353)

For heterosexual allies, dissonance might occur when gay friends experience harassment or when gay intimate relationships are not considered to be loving or worthy of state recognition. Patricia Sullivan sums it up nicely in her article “Sexual Identity Development: The Importance of Target or Dominant Group Membership,” when she says, “Dominant group members (allies) acknowledge that heterosexism inhibits fathers from showing affection to their sons, men from developing intimate relationships with other men, heterosexual women from accepting the romance and innocent attraction that is part of an emotionally intimate female friendship, and most children from having the time and space to develop for themselves their unique sexual identity” (11). These heterosexist assumptions have plagued the U.S. for a long time, detrimental most to the LGBT community, but do also leave negative effects among straight allies.

My Experiences with LGBT Friends, Part III. Lastly, there are my friends who inspire me to fight for their legacy, to break down negative stereotypes, and raise awareness that hatred is a serious emotion that has lasting impact on the world. These fighters struggle with harassment from people, suffer from the stigmatized health effects too often associated with the gay

community, and have left the earth before they had the chance to see some kind of victory.

My first relationship with a transgender individual was Smith. Smith was a VISTA with me during my second year of AmeriCorps. Smith was born a woman, but appears as a male and chooses to be addressed as one. At Smith's campus, he initiated a TransCampus awareness campaign. He went around to various departments and talked to them about trans issues, worked with students, and worked to raise a trans perspective on campus. For his campus this kind of thinking was radical, and he went up against a variety of nay-sayers. Also during this time, Smith was applying to schools so that he could complete his bachelor's degree. Smith had his eyes on a historical women's college. Unfortunately, this college would not accept Smith because of its status of only accepting "women." Because Smith decided to apply as a man, even though biologically he was still female, he was denied acceptance, based on it being an all-women's school. I remember being surprised with the college's decision and wished I could do something to make Smith feel better. Smith reminded me that sexuality is a very complicated issue and the world even the most liberal institutions, are not ready to blur the lines between gender binaries, particularly those places that have long standing traditional rules. During that year Smith provided me with glimpses of what life was like for him.

Jared was a friend of mine in middle school. In an earlier paper, I stated, "Growing up in the conservative dairy lands of California, most kids were growing up to believe that relations were only to be held between men and women. My friend did not fit nicely into the framework of what one is supposed to be like as a male teenager, and thus was picked on by peers and unfortunately lacked support from home" (Callaghan 2). Jared and I were teammates in Odyssey of the Mind, an extra-curricular/after school program that promoted creative problem solving. As a team, we spent the afternoon's together working on our project. Jared became a great friend

during those few years of middle school. Sadly, Jared moved away in the 8th grade and a year, later he committed suicide. I remember being really sad when I found out of his death. I also remember that I hid my sadness. I did not want others to know how much his death impacted me; out of fear of not wanting to be picked on (I was already the principal's daughter!). Like the many other lives that have been taken away from this earth too early, Jared's lives on through the community and its steady progression in raising awareness of the damaging effects of school bullying.

I first learned that my Aunt Diane had HIV in an airplane, flying back to California. Why my mom thought that being in the air would be a good time to tell me about her sister-in-law is unknown to me, but the manner in which she told me stays with me. When telling me Diane's story, I remember my mom's tone was one of compassion and inclusion. She said that Diane and Nancy (her partner at the time) are in a mutually loving relationship and that it is okay for women to love women and men to love men. My aunt has been living with HIV now for 30 years, yet today as I observe at my workplace through student informal comments, people still have the nasty stereotype that HIV/AIDS was brought upon the gay and lesbian community due to their lifestyle choices, or that outsiders can contract the virus by talking or hanging around LGBT people. These images have plagued the LGBT community. Yet my Aunt illustrates that living a full life is still possible with HIV.

Why are Stereotypes Harmful? Stereotypes and unsavory images of LGBT people are not new to today's society. U.S. history shows that there have been several efforts made in creating detrimental images of LGBT people, focusing on the *kind of* person rather than the *behavior* of the person. In order to illustrate the damaging impact of these images and stereotypes, several gay and lesbian advocate groups as well as scholars have begun collecting data from LGBT

people, highlighting their everyday experiences as citizens. As a Special Programs Coordinator at a local college in Boston, I interact daily with college students who run the spectrum in how they identify their sexuality. Through my interactions, I find that students want and need a space for having conversations about their sexual preferences. They need to learn from each other, and need to know their voices have a place in the institution. Currently, I see this lacking at my workplace, and have been motivated to make my office be a safe space for students. Most shocking to me are the results of campus climate reports from other colleges and universities. College is generally the time when young adults first experience feelings of dissonance involving societal oppression, so to have that coupled with experiences of harassment and fear illustrates the lasting impact of negative stereotypes. In 2003, Susan Rankin, Professor of Higher Education at Pennsylvania State University, ran a study on the campus climate for LGBT people (students, faculty and staff). Rankin's findings drew from 1,669 LGBT people. Unfortunately, the data shows the quality of life for LGBT students does not get much better in college compared with high school. The Rankin data finds:

“20% feared for the physical safety because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, 51% concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation, 41% believe their college does not thoroughly address issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, and lastly 43% felt that the curriculum does not represent the contributions of LGBT people.” (19)

These findings describe a situation where one will continue to stay closeted, feel ashamed, and unwelcomed. Sadly, these reports continue to show the effects of homophobia. Societal progress has been made, but yet people still have values and attitudes that outcast and demoralize the LGBT community.

My Experiences With the LGBT Community, Part IV. Throughout all of these stories of people who have greatly impacted my journey, there are also the stories of people I have never met. Most impactful, and what ultimately paved the way for synthesis research were the lost lives of six young boys. In September 2010, six young men chose to end their lives due to the harassment they experienced at their perspective schools. Billy Lucas (15), Cody J. Barker (17), Seth Walsh (13), Tyler Clementi (18), Asher Brown (13) and Raymond Chase (19) were all open with their gay identities, making them victims to anti-gay bullies on their school campuses. It is reported that some of the men spoke with school officials; however, the schools did not act on the anti-gay harassment (Callaghan 2). For the first time, I was witnessing harassment at a national level and in unprecedented occurrence. I was alarmed with why it was happening, why not more was being done by school officials, when did an epidemic of hate against young gay teens begin, and due to my own relationships with LGBT people I felt personally saddened with the loss of these boys' lives. For me these deaths were fueled by nasty, venomous spirit, they were unnecessary, and could have been prevented. When the deaths occurred, I was taking a course called Issues and Controversies in Antiracist/Multicultural Education. The course provided me with the space to think through, elaborate, and expand on why I was troubled with what was happening.

It finally came to me that I could be preventing deaths among young gay adults by becoming a more vocal ally in my personal and professional life. In my professional life, I did not see anyone voicing LGBT concerns; the LGBT voice was not present at the table where decisions were being made. I found my workplace to not acknowledge an LGBT presence on campus, which contradicts the college's attempt to acknowledge other identities through student groups and offices dedicated to the identities. In my self-dialogues, I realized I could, and

wanted to, be doing more to provide safe spaces, open dialogues, and more to rid my personal life and as much as I could my workplace of the terrible, homophobic attitudes that exist. Why did it take so long for me to come to this conclusion? I was afraid; afraid that I would be called out for not being a true member of the community. In my head I was telling myself that I could not fight for something I did not claim to be. Broido mentions my concerns in becoming vocal ally in saying, allies have, “concerns about experiencing both homophobia from the larger society and rejection by people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual heighten a counselor’s (ally’s) fear and confusion” (347). Reflecting now, I see these concerns were stopping me in taking action. My thinking changed when I truly discovered the critical thinking disposition of empathy. Through empathy I could place myself in the life of a LGBT person and experience their struggles and fears. In order to really know and understand what it is like to be queer (a general term used to identify LGBT people), my initial inclination, as someone who enjoys learning the histories of different groups and people, was to review the history of the LGBT movement. I wanted to go back, examine how the movement started, where it’s been, who were the historical key players as well as who was currently at the forefront of the movement. In doing this research, I found people who struggled with some of the same issues of my friends’ experiences. I found a collection of victories that have brought the movement to where it is today, and I’m continuing to find that fear is commonly manipulated by people in power to turn a group of people against another. I find that people are less likely to hurt each other when they are in relationships with one another. When they recognize each other has equals.

SECTION II: THE LGBT MOVEMENT

Reflections on why History Matters. Within any people’s history, particularly a minority or oppressed groups, the journey is shaped by both negative and positive influences. Minority

groups are categorized as identities deviant of mainstream acceptance or influence. Those identities such as race, sex, sexual orientation and, religious affiliation, have throughout history been cause for speculation and fear among those who were in power at the time. The gay rights movement follows similar patterns with other progressive movements in U.S. history; its history illustrates the need to come together, identify its agenda, and move toward advocating for its goals both politically and socially. Yet, due to the sensitive and sometimes invisible nature of homosexuality, the LGBT movement has striking differences compared with other minority movements: civil rights, African American, and women's liberation movements. In her book *Queer American: A People's GLBT History of the United States*, Vicki L. Eaklor says, "While GLBT history is yet another in a growing list of minority histories, there are factors that distinguish it from these other histories and make it more problematic. One concerns the risks that have been involved in teaching and learning it while another is the historical visibility or 'presence' of the proposed subjects. What these factors seem to share, at root, are both homophobia and heterosexism" (4). Eaklor's quote illustrates that the history involves the prejudicial fear that people have of homosexuals, but also how the fear is deeply seeded in a form of institutional oppression that limits sexual preference. The meaning of heterosexism is an extension of racism, sexism, and the many other forms of oppression. It is the prejudice, attitudes, and actions of those against homosexuality that properly differentiate heterosexism from homophobia. Brian Watkins in his essay "Bending Towards Justice" takes Kathy Obeart's definition of homophobia as being "the irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of people who are gay, lesbian and bisexual" (268). These two terms are used interchangeably by many within the queer studies field, yet it appears that the actions, the acts against those of a homosexual nature are based off of heterosexist prejudice, whereas homophobia is focused more on the *fear* of

homosexuals, regardless of any acts of verbal or physical violence and harassment which may take place. Yet, within this murky LGBT history, there are stories of people who tirelessly moved the community forward, through their words, convictions and political actions. They fought against public policies, social conservatives and tore the limits on people's perceptions of sexual preference. These are the movers and shakers of their times.

As someone who enjoys learning history through the personal accounts of people, in this section I will go through the history (starting roughly in the 20s and ending in the early 90s) in telling the personal stories of those who have made significant strides in moving the LGBT community more into the mainstream. It should be noted that the history describes accounts from LGBT people. It does not provide accounts from allies. The names within the paper that appear to in bold are people who made considerable gains in the movements. The names might be familiar to some, but I hope to bring out names of lesser known individuals. Unpacking the history of the LGBT movement was very important to me. In order for me to feel comfortable and confident in being an ally, I wanted to know where the movement has been. In working with helping an oppressed group to move forward, I needed to understand the complexities of its past. As mentioned earlier, in this section my reflections on what I have taken away from the different periods within the history will be presented in italics. In doing this, I hope to illustrate my thinking patterns, which could act as a guide for other allies who are beginning to learn about the LGBT history.

Period Prior to World War II. There is a plethora of gay accounts within the 20s and 30s, showcasing the lively times of jazz, prohibition, and urbanization. Port cities became hubs of activity, and speakeasies were underground fantasy lands where gender orientations were blurred. But at the same time, all of these activities contradicted the Victorian values that were

largely present within policies and societal culture of the time. In December of 1924, **Henry Gerber** set off to form an organization for homosexuals. Eaklor describes Gerber's motivation in saying, "After World War I, he was stationed at Germany, where he remained until 1923. Berlin was then the site of flourishing gay and lesbian cultures, and the center for scientific investigation of sex and gender and the world's first movement for homosexual. Gerber was fully aware of that movement and when he arrived back in Chicago he decided to create an organization for homosexuals" (Eaklor 55). Calling themselves the Society of Human Rights, Gerber and his few friends sought out to educate the public by holding lectures and printing a publication called *Friendship and Freedom*. It published two articles. Sadly, society was not ready for an organized homosexual group and the group disbanded. Gerber says in Eaklor's book, "The big, fatal, fearful obstacle seemed always to be the almost willful misunderstanding and ignorance on the part of the general public concerning the nature of homosexuality" (55). It would not be until the early 50s that gay men and women were able to be, become more successful in coming together to form a community.

Also within the early turn of the century was the radical work done by European sexologists. Most famous in trying to normalize homosexual activity was German sexologist **Magnus Hirschfield**. As an openly gay physician, Hirschfield and other notable physicians, including Karl Heinrich Ulrich, Karl Wesphal, and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, developed theories on same-sex love and sex in reaction to Prussia's newly adopted legal code which indicated that homosexual acts between males were considered unnatural fornication and were deemed criminal offenses. Significantly, their work introduces two themes within LGBT history. Eaklor depicts the themes by saying, "the stimulus to organize around an identity caused by discrimination, persecution, or worse; and a kind of love/hate relationship between GLBT people

and professionals in law and medicine (since doctors and lawyers had power to both cause and relieve homophobia” (34). Hirschfield and his colleagues promoted positive and natural views of homosexuals, calling them a ‘third sex.’ Rejecting the notion of homosexuality as a mental illness and degeneracy, Hirschfield organized major efforts to repeal the legal codes against homosexuality, including 1897s Scientific Humanitarian Committee and 1919s Institute for Sexual Science. Sadly with the rise of the Nazi movement, Hirschfield’s work was destroyed. Literally his offices were burned. Luckily by this time, his ideas already had some influence among scientists in the U.S. and a growing debate between whether a homosexual was ‘natural’ or a ‘deviant’ was taking place in the still conservative, post-war landscape.

In the U.S. in the early 20s neurologists James B. Kieran and G. Frank Lydston were also studying sex. These gentlemen claimed that homosexual acts were ‘perversions’ and were cautious with how homosexuality would influence society. In *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, Jonathan Ned Katz describes how Kieran is sourced as the first in the U.S. to use the term, heterosexual, specifically setting the term in opposition with homosexuality. Due to this work, the thinking among scientists, as well as lay people, changed from homosexuality being about the actions and behaviors made by people, to focusing on the kind of people who committed these acts; causing labels to develop, such as ‘pervert’ and ‘invert.’ Thus homosexuality’s natural biological side was sought to be ‘cured’ by acts of castration, psychoanalysis, cold baths, and surgery. Eaklor says “What they (U.S. scientists) shared was the general view that some kind of treatment was needed... Most important their work lead to a simple duality in which heterosexual was normal and homosexual was abnormal” (36). The tension between the LGBT community and medicine is particularly interesting facet within the history of the movement. Sadly, the history illustrates how the development within the turn of the century plagued and

stigmatized homosexuals up until the 1970s as being mental deviants.

As I reflect on this early period within the history of the LGBT movement I am most confronted with the duality of personas that people lived. In the post-war conservative landscape of the 20s during the day things were proper and neatly packaged together, but during the night especially when, venturing into urban areas, you see people living completely different lives and accepting these things to be, but only within the environment of the club or theatre. The nature of affairs, such as flamboyant jazz clubs with hosts in drag, could not appear during the day. For a queer man or woman during the time period, I imagine that living in this duality would be emotionally draining and harmful to one's mind and soul. I also reflect on the U.S. scientists during the time who were examining homosexuality. Clearly, these scientists were allowing their own biases and values to filter their ability to be critical in how they depicted people. I wonder if the landscape had not been so conservative, had not been so strict in ruling out what was considered proper and improper behavior, if homosexuality would have ever been considered immoral?

World War II. Moving into WWII, the U.S. saw an exodus of young men going overseas, as well as an abundance of young women entering the workforce, allowing women to gain independence and some sense of financial stability. When entering the service during WWII, homosexual men and women were positioned to serve the country and fight for patriotism. While enlisting in the war, sexual preference was not a deterrent in whether a person was suitable for fighting; yet, in 1940, psychiatrists began claiming that homosexuals were unfit for fighting in the war (Eaklor 68). Taking advice from the psychiatric community the military started screening personnel and those who were designated 'undesirable' were discharged under the new Section 8 policy and thus were given 'blue discharge sheets.' A couple years later, the mental health field termed homosexual types (referring to the person) as 'confirmed perverts' resulting in sexual identity to be the point of focus rather than the actual sexual crime.

Back at home women were joining the workforce and the dated customs of wearing dresses were being turned upside down. Working in factories, women were prohibited to wear dresses and skirts; adding casual pants and jeans within their wardrobe might not seem like much, but in this small step women were liberated in taking on a more masculine appearance. At

the same time, lesbians who were already coined 'butch' or were more masculine in dress and style, were now thrown in with the crowd, making their orientation invisible to society.

In this period, I think what is interesting is the collaboration between psychiatry and the military. In this example, I think the relationship could have used another outside perspective to ensure thoroughness in the two groups' thinking processes. One activity that the different stakeholders involved, could have done is an activity commonly used through CCT courses, DeBano's Hats. The activity forces individuals to think from another perspective, which allows for more creativity and it brings things to the front in terms of motivations and values that might be controlling how decisions are made. The activity also elicits an element of play through role playing the different perspective. I do have to stretch my mind in thinking that high ranking generals and leading psychiatrists during WWII would actually submit to participating in such an activity, but the intentions of the activity do promote clarity and assurance in making critical decisions that impact society.

Post WW II Society- Beginnings of the Homophile Movement. The early 1950s brought about an abundance of sex enjoyed by many who had returned home from the war. The advent of *Playboy* and figures like Marilyn Monroe increased the imagery of sex within U.S. culture. Yet at the same time, these images positioned men as the aggressively sexual who sought pleasure in the act, while the women were shown as passive and responsible for reproduction. And then came **Alfred Kinsey**, a zoologist turned sex researcher, who was not interested in what people thought about sex, but wanted to know what people were actually *doing*. His studies, which were compiled in two books, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior of the Human Female* (1953), found that sexual activities experienced by white men and women were placed on a spectrum, ranging from heterosexual relations to homosexual relations. Ned Miller, in his book *Out of the Past*, says, "Kinsey's findings demolished conventional thinking about sex, revealing a variety of sexual practices, including homosexuality, to be far more widespread than sex researchers and the general public had ever imagined" (250). Kinsey gave numbers and legitimacy to behaviors that were thought to be closeted or deemed abnormal by mental health professions. Miller goes on to quote queer historian John D'Emilio in saying, "By revealing the

wide divergence between ideals and behaviors, he (Kinsey) informed ordinary men and women that their private ‘transgressions’ marked them as neither deviant nor exception” (254). His studies illustrated that there was actually a large community of LGBT people, for those who felt isolated received hope in knowing they were no longer alone. Sadly, even with strong advocates for homosexual behaviors, in 1952, the American Psychiatric Association published its first professional handbook, called *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorder*. As Eaklor says, “it firmly established homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disorder” (81). Not until the early 70s would the APA consider removing homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

With the rise and fear of communism and the propaganda that connected it with homosexuality (homosexuals also being communists), for the gay and lesbian communities in the 1950s, the time can be characterized by bringing together isolated individuals into closeted communities. Also known as the Homophile movement, the 50s were the beginning of many efforts in organizing together as an LGBT community. Not with the purpose of coming out in society, as Kinsey reports did for homosexuals in one way or another, but in gaining numbers as a group in the hopes of assimilating within society. The Mattachine Foundation was founded in 1950 by **Harry Hay** in Los Angeles (Miller). Hay was a member of the American Communist Party, and took its structure in organizing the group. Neil Miller cites John D’Emilio, saying, “the Mattachine Society had a secret, cell-like hierarchical structure” (334). The Mattachines came together for discussion groups held privately in members’ homes, much like a support group. One of the main goals for the Mattachines was to build a gay community. Miller says, “Its aim included unifying isolated homosexuals and creating an ethical homosexual culture” (334). In coming together, the Mattachines began a monthly publication called *One*, which produced scientific articles from doctors and psychologists as well as private writings by

individual members. They also advocated to local Congress members as well as town officials. Sadly, the group found division in the mid-50s due to members' differing points of view in how the group should fight for inclusion, resulting in a new Mattachine Society. Division among how to advocate for rights involving passive and radical means would become a recurring theme with the different gay and lesbian organizations. Hay, who became a prominent activist in the movement, in the late 1970s also formed the group Radical Faeries during the rise of different masculine homosexual subcultures. During this time, the Radical Faeries were positioned opposite of the 'Bear' community; referring to a subculture of homosexual men who tend to be hyper masculine, larger and have facial hair. In forming Radical Faeries, Hay promoted a philosophy emphasizing the sacredness of the body and sex. Hay passed away in October of 2002, but is remembered fondly within the movement.

At the end of the 1950s the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) also formed, made up of lesbian women. Describing the beginnings of the group, Eaklor says, "It began in 1955 when eight women in San Francisco gathered to discuss an associate... they took the name from Pierre Louys' *Songs of Bilitis*, a literary reference to lesbianism" (97). Like Mattachine, small chapters started popping up in different cities, advocating for education and research. The group's major contribution was *Ladder*, its publication aiming to educate the masses, as well as to provide a literary outlet for aspiring lesbian writers, artists and poets. With the coming of lesbian feminism and a greater gay liberation, the group disbanded in 1972. One of the early leaders within DOB was **Barbara Gittings**. Gittings formed a chapter in New York and stayed highly involved in the movement throughout the 60s-70. In the 70s Gittings worked with the American Library Association and formed the first gay caucus within a professional organization (online). The caucus worked to promote positive literature of homosexuality within library collections. Sadly,

Gittings passed away in 2007. The LGBT History Month's online biography of Gittings, sums up her inspiration for her activism by saying:

"As a teenager, I had to struggle alone to learn about myself and what it meant to be gay. Now for 48 years I've had the satisfaction of working with other gay people all across the country to get the bigots off our backs, to oil the closet door hinges, to change prejudiced hearts and minds, and to show that gay love is good for us and for the rest of the world too. It's hard work — but it's vital, and it's gratifying, and it's often fun!" (online)

While gay men and lesbian women were coming together to form subcultural communities, Senator Joseph McCarthy was advocating for all perceived homosexuals and communists to be discharged from local state and federal jobs. During the 1950s, some politicians like McCarthy viewed homosexuality to be just as great a threat as communism, and often anyone with alleged homosexual traits were also liable to be suspected of being a communist. Both groups were of great concern to McCarthy, and he persecuted each group equally. David K. Johnson chronicles homosexual experiences during McCarthyism in his book *The Lavender Scare*. Eaklor quotes him saying, "By November... the purge of the perverts resulted in the dismissal of nearly six hundred federal civil servants" (87). In 1952, Executive Order 10450 was passed by President Eisenhower, making homosexuality cause for dismissal from federal employment (Eaklor). The 10450 Order greatly impacted the LGBT community in continuing to advance homophobia in society. The new perceived threat of homosexuality was linked to and fueled the fear of communism, connected with the military's effort of eliminating gay and lesbian personnel, and lastly linked to a newly heightened 'sex crime panic.' This new sex crime panic was associated with Kinsey's sexual male behavior findings and contributed to

the idea of homosexuals having an uncontrollable sex drive and desire.

Also within the 50s, the LGBT community started to link itself with other minority groups arguing that they were denied civil and social rights due to discrimination based on sexual preference and orientation. Helping to articulate this was Donald Webster Cory's *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach*. Influential for Mattachine and DOB, it began to give a voice to a national movement. Eaklor says:

“From those basic ideas the outlines of a national movement were drawn, the substance to be added, changed, and disputed from that time to this. To claim that the sum of accomplishments of the movement to 1963 are meager, as some do, may reflect expectations born of a later era more than possibilities of the fifties... As John D’Emilio put it, ‘... the movement took upon itself an impossible burden—appearing respectable to a society that defined homosexuality as beyond respectability.’” (101)

It would take the actions of fellow minority groups to lay the groundwork of protesting for civil rights, but by the end of the 1960s with the event at Stonewall, the Gay Liberation movement would come to its full steam.

In this period I reflect on the importance of having a community of support. Through CCT there has been a community that has allowed my thinking to develop and expand. In having this space to reflect, I have been able to examine my own biases and utilize dialogue tools, which in a community has fostered me to challenge the root of biases and uncover where there were judgments. In becoming an ally this is an essential first step in recognizing how being a heterosexual might limit one’s ability to think, elaborately and even imaginatively without judgment, in regards to romantic relationships.

I also take away the importance of risk taking. Harry Hal and Barbara Gittings were risk takers and without their foresight these groups would have never existed, thus keeping gays and lesbians in their closets at home. It is hard being a risk taker. I know in the past, I have passed up opportunities to confront homophobic comments, but for me learning the history of the struggles and battles that queer people had to face has enabled me to not let those moments pass me by. Now, I am confident in speaking up and against homophobic comments. Every ally has to determine what they need in order to be risk-taker.

The Sixties. One bridge between the civil rights movements to the gay rights movements who deserves acknowledgement is **Bayard Rustin**. Now known as the genius organizer behind the March to Washington in 1963, which culminated with Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, Rustin was an advisor and aide to King in the early 60s (Eaklor). A world traveling pacifist, Rustin was arrested in California in 1953 on moral charges for being in a backseat of a car with two other men. At that time, he was forced to resign from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, but two years later began working with King through the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Eaklor quotes D'Emilio describing Rustin in saying, "'Rustin initiated the process that transformed King into the most illustrious proponent of nonviolence in the world'. However, his 1953 conviction of 'public lewdness' hung like a cloud over his accomplishments in an era with no tolerance for 'perverts'" (110). Rustin laid the groundwork in providing other minority groups a strategy for activism, which becomes evident with the LGBT movement's picketing protests between the years of 1964 and 1965. Importantly, Rustin illustrates that even within minority movements, homophobia existed; therefore, those who hold multiple identities within minorities' standings (being black and gay, or being a woman and an lesbian) continue to face discrimination in multiple ways and ultimately will balance between the identities throughout their lives.

A city that has always drawn a counterculture crowd (the Beats and later the Hippies), San Francisco is an epicenter for gay activism and culture. It was at bars and restaurants such as the Black Cat that the movement began fostering a more political spirit. One key character was drag queen **Jose Sarria**, who ran for city supervisor in 1962 (14 years prior to Harvey Milk's city supervisor election in 1976), as well as organizing the League for Civil Education. During the same time bar owners formed the Tavern Guild, which rejected the harassment from police

for serving homosexuals, and soon after the Society for Individual Rights formed and the first gay community center was founded in 1966. More noticeable for the movement was the riot at **Compton's Cafeteria** in August of 1966 between transgender people, drag queens, and hustlers against police. Compton's Cafeteria was a 24-hour restaurant in the Tenderloin district, where transgender people would openly congregate, as they were unwelcome in gay bars. Because cross-dressing was illegal, police decided to raid the Cafeteria, pushing all those who were perceived to be cross dressing out into the street. And thus one event rippled out to a next event and a riot began. Compton's is the first transgender riot recorded in U.S. history, and from the event formed the National Transsexual Counseling Unit.

At the same time in the East, **Frank Kameny** was radically changing the communication tactics within the Mattachine Society by developing a political strategy for larger activism. Kameny, along with Jack Nichols founded the DC chapter of Mattachine in 1961. Taking a very different approach from other chapters, Kameny and Nichols believed that groups should "embrace a direct-action strategy similar to that of the black civil rights movements," says Neil Miller in *Out of the Past* (334). Between 1964 and 65, Mattachine and DOB members participated in several picketing protests up and down the Eastern Seaboard. Always in suits and dresses, these men women marched with signs illustrating that homosexuals should have the same individual basic rights as everyone else, and that homosexuals are not insane or child molesters. Kameny later gave the movement a new motto with "Gay is Good" in 1968 at the North American Conference of Homophile Organization (Eaklor). Kameny will remain a strong figurehead in the movement, working collaboratively with Barbara Gittings to fight the APA's mental health designation of homosexuality. At the time, with the influx of picketing demonstrations, conferences and policy drafting, the climate was ripe for a spark to set the

movement ablaze.

History will say the spark that ignited the movement was the late summer night at the Stonewall Inn of Greenwich Village in June of 1969. Stonewall Inn was known as a place for drag queens and teenage hustlers to hang out on the weekends. Neil Miller says, “The Stonewall was a less-than respectable establishment, even by the standards of gay bars at the time and was owned by the Mafia” (365). For several nights in late June, police would raid the bar for selling alcohol without a license and would take patrons outside, telling them to leave the scene. Miller references June 27th as the night when the Stonewall patrons decided not to go home, but rather to entice excitement from the police with “striking poses and campy comments.” Next, more people came to the bar throwing bricks and bottles, more police came in, fire broke out, and 13 singing drag queens were arrested by the end of the night. The next night more people, as well as the media, were back at Stonewall with signs and expressive chants. Today, the Stonewall Riots is referred to as the defining moment within the gay rights movement. Miller confirms the sentiment by explaining how after the riots, a month later, the first meeting of the Gay Liberation Front took place. “Three-four hundred gays and lesbians gathered at Washington Square and marched to the site of the riots chanting, ‘gay power!’ and singing ‘We Shall Overcome,’ finally the gay revolution arrived” (368). The Gay Liberation Front and Gay Activists Alliance both took an even stronger political and social agenda and advocated for all to come out to friends, families, coworkers and community members. The process of coming out to friends and family was now a signage of political affiliation with a movement that was tired of being nonexistent to society.

Throughout this period, I take away the importance of activism that comes from members within the oppressed group, but also from allies. Speaking on behalf of an oppressed group is what it means to be an ally. Through empathy, deliberate dialogues and, intentional relationships, allies can build bridges with dominant group members, which minority members

might have a harder time forming. Activism in itself can look very different for each ally. For myself, I see that I am being an activist when I open my office up to being a safe space for LGBTQ students. I also see that in having conversations with them, many of the younger students do not know the battles and victories within their history in identifying themselves as LGBTQ. Through learning the history, I can now tell these events as stories to students, which might inspire them to do their own research. Today, there are multiple ways allies can participate within the larger community. From volunteering with pro-gay rights organizations, to voting for marriage equality and anti-discrimination legislature, being an active ally enables an ally to stay connected with the people they are fighting for.

This period also shows me that oppression can occur within an oppressed group. Generalizations limit my ability to truly understand a situation, as well as hinder my thinking in posing creative solutions. The history of gay rights is complex. I now know dates, events, and people within the movement, but I will continue to reflect on the subtleties within the movement and the individuals whom I have been most impacted by through learning the history.

The Golden Age. Moving into the 70s, the movement experienced a sense of celebration and began to create its identity and cultures, while making stronger claims for equality. During the decade, subcultures within the community began to form among gay men and lesbians. These subcultures allowed new communities to form within the overall movement, allowing more individuals to feel connected to the effort as a whole. At the same time these subcultures were forming, there was an increased LGBT presence in print and live media, which brought a wider representation of queer voices within the movement. Some examples includes: the reclaiming of the Nazis' use of the pink and black triangles as an indicator of oppressed group; the color lavender was associated with lesbians; the color pink for gay men; and the rainbow became a uniting image for the community. In the 70s a subgroup of lesbians who also promoted feminists ideologies came together as Lesbian Feminists. The group found that both the gay liberation and second wave feminists lacked a certain level of sensitivity and believed both were marginalizing their unique perspective. Following other gay organizations, Lesbian Feminists created a scholarly journal, in 1975 *Signs*, as a place to voice their concerns and develop a growing body of work that supported their cause. Not afraid to take on heated issues, Lesbian Feminist within the decade pushed the limits on gender and lesbian culture. One issue they contested was the

binary images of butch/femme roles created after the war. They saw the roles being taken by women as another attempt or form of patriarchy and thus promoted androgyny. A very vocal Lesbian Feminist, **Adrienne Rich**, theorized that lesbianism is a continuum of experiences, moving across social and political spheres.

A big win within the 70s came with the removal of homosexuality from the list of mental disorders from the APA. Directing this fight were long time activists Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings. As mentioned earlier in the 50s with the fear of communism, the American Psychiatric Association deemed homosexuals as having a ‘sociopathic personality disorder.’ At the 1972 APA convention a five member panel, including Gittings and Kameny, addressed the tension the gay community had with psychiatry. In 1973, the APA Board of Trustees held a vote amongst itself and found that homosexuality could be removed from being called a mental disorder. The vote placed homosexuality on a spectrum of sexual behaviors. Eaklor quotes the amendment change: “Homosexuality *per se id* one form of sexual behavior and, like other forms of sexual behaviors which are not by themselves psychiatric disorders, is not listed in this nomenclature of mental disorders” (151). Eaklor goes on to explain that some scholars find the APA revisions mild, but for some who grew up believing they were sick and needed treatment, the overturn made significant changes and lasting contributions to the movement.

The 70s and 80s also saw a high level of gay and lesbian people running for public office. **Harvey Milk**, who ran openly gay in 1977 for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, is the most well-known due to his murder by Board Supervisor peer, Dan White. Knowing that his presence brought along a certain level of hatred, Milk famously recorded his will before his death. In the recording he eloquently depicts his motivation for office. From the film the *Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, he says, “It’s not about personal gain, not about ego, not about power—

it's about giving those young people out there in Altoona, Pennsylvania hope. You gotta give them hope" (film1). Eaklor points out that the first two politicians who ran as openly gay and won happened in 1974 with **Kathy Kozachenko** (Ann Arbor City Council) and **Elaine Noble** (Massachusetts State House). Also from Massachusetts, **Barney Frank** who came out in 1987 after being elected to the U.S. House 1981. Frank recently announced his retirement from the House at the end of his term in 2013. With a larger presence within the political arena, an effort to introduce marriage equality acts, such as the Equality Act of 1974 and the Civil Rights Amendments of 1975 began in the 70s, but sadly no such bills have passed federally, due to the rise of a new right wing conservative force that comes at the end of the 70s.

In being an ally, I have learned that it is important to celebrate the victories within an oppressed group and not solely concentrate on the injustices. I find that many of the queer students that I interact with at my workplace do not have any understanding of the victories within the 1970s. They recognize Harvey Milk's name, but most of them do not see how these events enable them to live in a more inclusive culture today. In my reflections, I realize that as an ally to a younger population of LGBT adults, it's my role to share the stories of the queer people who have become before them.

Storytelling and the use of personal narratives is a high-impact strategy for engaging people, while empowering them to become social change agents in society. In CCT, through reflective practice, I have become equipped with refining my own personal narrative. The practice of metacognition allows me to intentionally assess why I think the way I do, how I come to conclusions, and what actions I can take in leading a more reflective life. Metacognition also brings to light any biases and values that might be filtering my own thinking patterns, which enables me to stretch my thinking beyond myself to see other perspectives on issues which might be more controversial for me.

The backlash leading into the Eighties. If the 70's were coined as the community's Golden Age, unfortunately the 1980s were a return to the dark ages for both LGBT communities and other minorities groups. Most of the problems for the minority communities stemmed from New Right Conservative group that was fueled with restoring so-called "Christian family values." Eaklor describes the backlash of the 80s when she says, "Conservatives portrayed feminists as antifamily and sought to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision, attacked Affirmative Action

programs designed to force employers and schools to seriously consider as candidates women and nonwhite men, and demonized gay men and lesbians as dangerous to children” (166). Eaklor goes on to explain that within US political history there has always been a left ‘liberal’ side and a right ‘conservative’ side, divided on issues such as the size of federal government and the amount of assistance programs such as the New Deal and the Great Society provided to citizens. Yet, what made this ‘New Right’ group different from past conservative was their tactic of interweaving their Christian faith within politics. Eaklor says, “Until the 1970s, there seemed to be some agreement on all sides that moral and/or religious views should remain separate from party politics” (169). The New Right organizations such as the American Family Association, Focus on the Family, and the Moral Majority Coalition, spearheaded by leaders Pat Robertson and Rev. Jerry Falwell saw the progressive changes and advances for women, African Americans and homosexuals as a threat to their own values and existence. One of the more famous setbacks to the progressive changes that were beginning to take hold for the LGBT community was the ordinance repeal of 1977 in Miami Dade, Florida, turning back sexual orientation discrimination laws (Eaklor). Charging the repeals was Anita Bryant, who campaigned that gays and lesbians were dangerous to young people. Her Save Our Children, Inc. collected sixty-five thousand signatures in Miami Dade County, calling for a referendum of the newly enacted ordinance protecting gay and lesbian people from discrimination based on sexual orientation. Sadly, with this victory for conservatives, other counties began repealing similar, newly- passed ordinances. Yet in California, the gay community defeated Proposition 6, which aimed to rid California schools of homosexual teachers. Harvey Milk was influential in campaigning against the initiative, securing the defeat right before his death in November.

This time period in the history gay rights incites frustration and excitement in me. I am frustrated by the worldviews of some people, who do not see all people as equal. I am frustrated

with how these people craft messages that elicit fear in other people, thus influencing more to think the way they do, and I'm frustrated by people who accept their messages on face value without reflecting if they really buy the message in the first place. Unfortunately, my frustration is not just with the episodes in the 70s, it continues today when similar tactics are used to continue a fear of homosexuality. However, all this frustration leads me to be excited in taking action and working with other queer people and allies.

AIDS. “And then there was AIDS” says Eaklor in describing the other major blow for the gay community in the 1980s. Known early on as ‘gay cancer’ or the ‘Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID),’ the first outbreaks occurred in 1981 among gay men in both San Francisco and New York. Baffled by the situation, immunologist Dr. Michael Gottlieb and dermatologist Dr. Alvin Friedman-Kien first discussed the early cases and their findings in an article in the Center for Disease Control’s *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* and other articles started appearing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *New York Times*. Neil Miller cites the death toll of AIDS victims: “1,300 infected as of April 1983, 8,797 by the middle of the 1985, with half of them already dead. More than 70 percent were gay and bisexual men” (440). In 1984, Dr. Robert Gallo detected the virus causing AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), calling it HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and health professionals were able to list high risk behaviors. Unfortunately within these few years, the message of HIV/AIDS as a gay disease brought on by lifestyle choices furthered the perception of homosexuals as being a danger to young people as well as a danger to the general public. Historian Jennifer Brier describes this in saying, “the public face of AIDS was linked to certain kinds of people instead of kind of behaviors. Public health officials regularly talked about the likelihood that a member of a risk group would be infected with AIDS, but rarely seemed interested in detailing how a person’s behavior, whether sexual or not, made him or her more likely to become infected” (Eaklor 175). Following similar patterns of previous health professions (homosexuality= mental disorder), we see that the attention is directed to the *type* of person rather than behaviors linked to the cause. In

response, gay activists quickly came together to further research, provide counseling and support, and fight the messaging cemented in many that AIDS was just a gay thing (Miller).

Larry Kramer was an early gay activist in forming the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in 1982. Kramer was a significant playwright and novelist within the gay community. After three of his close friends passed within the first year of AIDS, Kramer knew something had to be done. Bringing together 80 or so men and Drs. Gottlieb and Friedman-Kien to his apartment for a conversation on what could be done, the men quickly raised \$7,000 and soon after formed GMHC. Continuing to hold meetings and fund raising parties, GMHC became the first AIDS service organization. By providing health brochures, an AIDS hotline, legal, counseling and financial assistances, within the first year GHMC raised more than \$150,000. Yet, as we know, division is common for many gay organizations, and soon enough division came to the group on the debate of whether or not GMHC should advocate for gay men to stop having sex, or to at least start using safe sex tactics. Kramer was in favor for the GMHC to take a public stance on the gay sex issues. He also wanted the group to pressure the city to provide more funds for AIDS services and though a variety of heated debates on who among the board should represent the group to city politicians, Kramer quit the board and founded ACT UP in 1987. In ACT UP, Kramer found a group who wanted to vocalize their concerns. Most notable was the group's slogan, 'Silence = Death.' Kramer released many of the problems he saw in the silence being given to AIDS organization, in his play, *The Normal Heart*, in 1985. In San Francisco, **Cleve Jones** and others were pulling together names of those who were lost due to AIDS in quilt panels. Eaklor says, "Their plan was to memorialize those who had died and their means were quilt panels, and idea conceived earlier, in the forms of placards with names by Cleve Jones" (177). Today the Names Project continues. In 2006 the quilt had over 45,000

panels and December 1st of each year is marked as a day to remember all those who have passed due to AIDS.

Even with the many blows brought out in the 1980s, the movement continued to gain presence and celebrated many successes. The Second March on Washington on October 11, 1987 became a venue to publicize the AIDS tragedy and the government inaction to the epidemic. Eaklor says, “More than half a million people attended the march and the opportunity to witness the first viewing of the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt” (187). Even with the media’s ignorance of the March, many in the community felt rejuvenated in wanting to progress in making change. In 1988, the March’s anniversary date became the official date of National Coming Out Day, which nationally aired a panel regarding the day on the Oprah Winfrey Show (Eaklor). The day signifies a victory for a decade full of challenges. It recognizes the lives of LGBT people, and for those people who are questioning whether or not to come out, National Coming Out Day provides a safe option as well as way to come out within a group of support.

Even with the many tragedies of AIDS, I am taking away once again the power of community. The Eighties teaches that grassroots efforts and a united front goes a long way in fighting for rights as well as turning lemons into lemonade, with the formation of longstanding national organizations and memorial anniversaries. One area of potential ally work for me is in the area of AIDS prevention, particularly in educating international students at my workplace in the realities of AIDS. Through my work, I have the pleasure of working with organizations that serve the AIDS community in trying to engage my students as volunteers with the organization. Since January I have had at least five students ask me if they can get AIDS if they volunteered at one of these organizations. Sadly, I’m shocked and frightened each time I hear this, but it also becomes an opportunity to talk with the student about why they think they can ‘catch’ AIDS. Out of the five students, three of them have now volunteered at the Boston Living Center and their initial perceptions of people living AIDS have changed.

The Opportunities of the Nineties. Moving into the 90s with the hope on President Clinton to bring about a more LGBT inclusive agenda, the community received successes and losses. For the first time with President Clinton, LGBT activists were welcomed to the White House.

Present at the meetings were the leaders of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the National

Lesbian and Gay Task Force, and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund. Additionally, Clinton appointed the first openly lesbian to the post of Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, **Roberta Achtenberg**. Even with these firsts, the LGBT community felt extreme disappointment with the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy of 1993 (Eaklor). The policy was a backward step for the community; after advocating people to come out of the closet, DADT told service men and women to hide their homosexual tendencies while in service and prohibited any openly gay or lesbian men and women to enlist. In September 2011, DADT finally ended, by President Barak Obama repealing DADT.

Also during the late 90s the U.S. experienced the death of Matthew Shepard. **Matthew Sheperd**, a college student at the University of Wyoming, was violently killed by two men who were uncomfortable with Sheperd's sexual orientation. They robbed, whipped, and tied him to a fence, leaving him to die in the Wyoming countryside. At the time of the trial, hate crime laws in Wyoming did not include acts against sexual orientation, and thus the two men, Aaron McKinny and Russell Henderson, were given lesser sentences: life in prison over the death penalty. Out of Shepard's death, new hate crime legislation has been introduced by President Obama and passed in 2009. In a *Washington Post* article announcing the Senate's approval of the hate crime bill, Ben Perishing says, "The measure would extend the current definition of federal hate crimes -- which covers attacks motivated by race, color, religion or national origin -- to include those based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability" (hate crime). The passage of the hate crime bill was a significant turning point in protecting the rights of the LGBT community. Today, the impact is seen, in the courts' ruling in finding, former Rutger student Dharum Ravi

* "The House passed the act, designated [H.R. 1913](#), by a vote of 249 to 175. The bill was introduced in the Senate on April 28 by [Ted Kennedy](#), [Patrick Leahy](#), and a bipartisan coalition; it had 43 cosponsors as of June 17, 2009. The Matthew Shepard Act was adopted as an amendment to S.1390 by a vote of 63-28 on July 15, 2009. On October 22, 2009, the act was passed by the Senate by a vote of 68-29. President Obama signed the measure into law on October 28, 2009" (Wikipedia article "Matthew Shepard").

guilty of invasion of privacy, leading to his roommate of Tyler Clementi (referenced in section I) to commit suicide.

I remember the death of Matthew Sheperd. I was in the 8th grade, Jared (referenced earlier in paper) had just moved and I had never seen death like that before. Sheperd was not the first person to be murdered because of his sexual orientation, but for me it was my first death. His story and legacy is what is my greatest take away from the Nineties.

SECTION III: THE ROOTS OF HETEROSEXISM AND HOMOPHOBIA

How are attitudes and prejudices created? A person's attitude is the starting gate for the formation of prejudices and discrimination. Unfortunately, people lack the ability to remain neutral on subjects. From favorite foods to the correct way of driving, to even more controversial issues such as homosexuality, everyone has an opinion. A person's attitude is based from one of the following, affective (based off of emotions), cognitive (based off of beliefs and thoughts), and behavioral (based off actions towards the subject of your attitude). In examining attitudes, it should not be overlooked how attitudes are learned. Where do attitudes come from? In his textbook *Social Psychology*, Elliot Aronson describes that attitudes can take on positive or negative forms. Affectively-based attitudes, he says, "come from many sources, we can group them into one family because they do not result from a rational examination of the issue, are not governed by logic, and are often linked to people's values, so that trying to change them challenges the values" (194). Arguments against homosexuality stem from a person's affective and cognitive attitudes, where the opposition is emotionally connected with traditional values and, cognitively, also connected to traditional values and beliefs.

Another dimension of an attitude is whether it is implicit or explicit in nature. Explicit attitudes are opinions we acknowledge consciously. They are controllable and can be manipulated within a given context. In the article "Sources of Implicit Attitudes," Laurie Rudman of Rutgers University explains the differences between implicit and explicit attitudes.

She says, “A prominent conception is that implicit attitudes stem from past (and largely forgotten) experiences, whereas explicit attitudes reflect more recent or accessible events,”

Furthering her description Rudman states, “Implicit attitudes can be characterized as the automatic association people have between an object and evaluation whether it is good or bad. By contrast, explicit attitudes may reflect more thoughtful or deliberative responding” (79).

Implicit attitudes are tricky. They are uncontrollable, rooted by early lessons of what is right and wrong, good or bad. Additionally, they are more strongly connected to social values and beliefs, which over time cements, making change and/or the transformation of implicit attitudes difficult.

From attitude comes a prejudice. Aronson continues his definition of prejudice by stating, “Prejudice is a hostile or negative attitude toward people in a distinguishable group, based solely on their membership in that group” (417). Prejudices are positive and negative in nature, and like attitudes, every group is affected by prejudice. A prejudice is seen within actions and/or the response from the attitude. When hearing the term prejudice, most people think of a negative image, which for the most part is valid. From prejudices stereotypes are formed. From his article “Implicit Social Cognition,” Anthony Greenwald from the University of Washington describes the definition of stereotypes as being applied to a group. He says, “A stereotype is a socially shared set of beliefs about traits that are characteristic of members of a social category. Whereas an attitude implies a consistent evaluative response to its object, stereotype may encompass beliefs with widely diverging evaluative implications” (14). Stereotypes are cognitive in nature. The conscious mind is active in placing people in categories or designating traits to people. Aronson says, “Often stereotyping is merely a technique we use to simplify how we look at the world—and we all do it to some extent” (418). Yet, stereotyping can be tricky. The danger lies in the fact that people tend to be consciously lazy once there are developed shortcuts.

Therefore it is important to be mindful that one does impose negative attitudes upon the whole group.

Why are attitudes and prejudices forms? In connecting the development of attitudes, forming into prejudices and thus creating stereotypes, the fear of homosexuality is rooted heavily in the explicit and implicit attitudes of people. Homosexuality provides another scapegoat for those in power to use in eliciting fearful attitudes, and responding with violence and hatred. In 1983 historian John D'Emilio published one of the first landmark books used in creating a LGBT field, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities the Making of Homosexual Minority in the United States*. In using the term '*minority*' he draws attention to the relationship the group has in being marginalized by those in power within society. Eaklor continues to describe the term in saying, "A minority group perceives itself as having less power than the majority as a result of institutional discrimination. That discrimination is justified by cultural biases against the group—racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia—that are based on one or more shared characteristics—being nonwhite, female, Jewish, homosexual" (93). For those in power, homosexuality breaks many of the 'natural' social rules that have been set in place... by those in power.

Homosexuality rejects the notion of heterosexual normative claims and thus scares people. No longer are people choosing to fit nicely in the perceived boxes of gender and sexual preference. In a patriarchal society, where men and women have clearly defined gender roles, homosexuality threatens these gender roles; particularly for men. Homosexuality conflicts with men's perception of what masculinity should be. Men see other gay men being treated like women, or taking on characteristics that could be perceived more feminine and thus appearing to be less like a man. Sadly, the notion of manhood gets grounded early into male psyche and it is

then accepted, which only gives legitimacy to violent tendencies. Patricia Sullivan, in her article “Sexual Identity Development: The Importance of Target or Dominant Group Membership”

says:

“Some of the most pervasive assumptions of a heterosexist society, as adapted from Riddle and Morin (1977), are the following: Heterosexuality is more mature and is preferred; heterosexual relationships equal love and family, whereas homosexual relationships equal sex; homo/bisexual persons need counseling or religious guidance and should avoid temptation to act on their feelings; there is a need to find the ‘cause’ of homosexuality, and homosexuals are to be pitied if they are ‘born that way’; gay men are effeminate and weak, lesbians want to be men.” (5)

We see how these assumptions have been used throughout history to manipulate people into being fearful of others, having negative, limited views of self-worth, and, more present today, how these assumptions create a violent reaction seen in bullying at schools, and tragically even suicide among LGBT youth and young adults.

One tactic that has been used in justifying the concept of homosexuality as unnatural has been the use of scripture from the Holy Christian Bible. Scripture has often been a source for those needing a validation in claiming just cause for values and beliefs against a minority group. In the film, *For the Bible Tell Me So*, director, Daniel J. Karlake chronicles the lives of five individuals who came out in religious families. Mixed with discussions from interfaith clerical leaders, the film depicts the danger in taking the scripture as a literal base for determining what’s right and wrong in society. Reverend Mel White says, “For a long time the Bible has been misused to support prejudices - apartheid, segregation, and slavery, second class citizenship of

women, now it's being used, misused to condemn gay people. It's an old trick. Fundamentalist Christians have been using it throughout the ages and now they're using it again" (film2). The film depicts a variety of different interfaith leaders commenting on how scripture, particularly within the Old Testament, was written in a time with a very fixed cultural view, which many people do not take into consideration. Bible literalists believe in the exact word of what the Bible says without taking a full look of the cultural context of when it's written, or how the text was written with a cultural understanding of its time. The Biblical scholars in the film explain that it is dangerous to take solely the words and not apply that to the perspectives of those who wrote the text as well as see how the words fit in today's modern setting. Archbishop Desmond Tutu says in the film, "The Bible is the word of God, through words of human beings speaking in the idiom of their time, and the richness of the Bible comes from the fact that we don't take it as so literal" (film2). Most anti-gay leaders will cite the Holiness Code in Leviticus and Exodus, which describe all the laws of day. The television show, *The West Wing*, further illustrates the danger in Bible literalists when President Bartlett, played by Martin Sheen, confronts Dr. Jenna Jacobs, a conservative radio host, during a meeting for radio talk show hosts in the White House. In the discussion, he ridicules her for holding on to one of the laws that calls homosexuality an abomination, while forgetting about all the other rules. He says, "I'm about to sell my youngest daughter; what's the going rate? Should I kill my Chief of Staff for working on Sabbath," illustrating how Bible literalists have utilized scripture to work in their favor when they need it (television). It's selective reading. When the word *abomination* is used in the Bible, as it is used with the word *homosexuality*; in Leviticus 18:22, it is addressing a ritual, culturally wrong at the time. It is not referring to being innately immoral. Particularly in this time, the Hebrews were trying to grow their nation, so men were supposed to save their seed for women in order to

procreate. Since procreation cannot happen when in male homosexuality, it was an abomination for two men to lay together. Bible literalists have not fully understood the context of the text and thus manipulated the meaning of the message. Reverend Peter Gomes says, “You have to think when you read the Bible, which is why before the Reformation, perhaps the Roman Catholics were right, saying ordinary people shouldn’t be reading the Bible, because usually they get it wrong and I’m convinced that usually we do” (film2).

Many Queer scholars have spent countless hours discussing the roots of negative stereotypes and discriminating myths of LGBT people in society. P.B. Jung and R.F. Smith discuss some of these claims in their book, *Heterosexism: An Ethical Challenge*. Jung and Smith focus on the myth that homosexuality endangers young children, presented by the New Right Conservative in the 1980s particularly by anti-gay vocalists Rev. Jerry Falwell, Pat Buchanan and Anita Bryant. The New Right claimed that homosexuality victimizes children, and causes youth to be confused over their sexual orientations. Jung and Smith challenge the argument that homosexuals can confuse or sway youth into becoming gay or lesbian is especially degrading to the community. Jung says, “Some assume that because homosexual people cannot have children they will recruit children to become homosexual. In addition, children will be confused about whether they are or ought to be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual if they are aware of these options through positive role model” (97). Gays and lesbians do not make youth question their sexual identity, rather the dominant heterosexual culture that promotes heterosexual relationships as normal and homosexual relations as other, causes doubt and anxiety in youth and young adults. Because of this heterosexist bias, youth are not exposed to positive gay and lesbian role models, because heterosexual adults are fearful that the homosexuals will turn their youth into gays and lesbians. Oh my! The confusion and anxiety youth face regarding their sexuality can be

avoided, if society acknowledges homosexuality as a legitimate, safe, and perfectly okay sexual preference. Also, allies play an important role here. Allies can help other adults begin to think through their heterosexist biases and be a living example in displaying appropriate actions and behaviors.

SECTION IV: MY CURRENT ALLY WORK

Starting with Reflection. In learning the history of the LGBT movement, I am empowered in knowing the past challenges and successes. The knowledge that comes with knowing the history has boosted my confidence and has enabled me to take more risks in sharing what I know with the students I work with, as well as with my friends and family. But even before diving into the history, I had to start with myself. I had to reflect on my own biases, assumptions, and attitudes. Reflection was pivotal in opening up to a new perspective. The Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) Program led me to realize the importance of reflection. Prior to starting CCT, I did not take reflection seriously. I did not understand that reflection could lead one to discover patterns of thought, unearth hidden biases, or find new sources of motivation. In order to be an ally for any minority group in a society, a person must start with reflection.

Moving through reflective questions (see table at end of paragraph), I found they acted as a guide for me to think through what I really thought about homosexuality. Questions like these were helpful in addressing some of my hidden biases as well as figuring out my weak spots in being an ally. My responses to a few of the reflective questions are in italics in the table. For those potential allies, my responses might help in acting as a guide in examining one's own thoughts. In responding to the questions I used the strategy of free writing. Free writing is a great reflective writing tool because its focus is just to write and not worry about what is coming. Ellen Broido describes Rita Hardiman and Bailey W. Jackson's Social Identity Development

Model, illustrating the progression allies go through in undressing dominant learned values and biases. Broido quotes the two in saying, “The transition from one stage to another is typically motivated by a recognition that the world view of the current stage is either illogical, detrimental to a healthy self-concept, impractical or in general no longer serving some important self-interest” (349). In my development as an ally, I reflected on how a heterosexist society sets out to privilege a very limited view of sexuality and love. Through reflection, I now have a clear sense of the negative impacts of homophobia and the dangers they present to society. Prejudicial thinking and behaviors limit a person’s critical and creative thinking. The attitudes and values associated cause a person to create a filter in how they think through new ideas and analysis problems. CCT helped me to harness critical and creative thinking dispositions, which would allow me to be more free in understanding and accepting new interpretations on ideas that I thought I knew already. I am now able to elaborate and pose new ideas and suggestions for people who are struggling to accept homosexuality, and sometimes help others see that binary thinking causes quick judgments and rash decision making.

Reflective Questions: Discovering our own LGBT Biases		
What’s your earliest memory of marriage? How has it changed over time?	What’s your philosophy in working with people?	How many LGBT people do you know? Are friends with?
<p><i>When I think about marriages, I instantly think of Princess Diana’s wedding. I see the wedding ceremony. I see it as a huge spectacle that was aired on TV and everyone watched. But when I think about marriages, I think of my mom and dad, who have been married for over 30 years. I think of their fight;, I think of how they have had to work on their relationship, through therapy. Through them, I see that marriage isn’t a passive one day event, but a constant ever-changing relationship that evolves over time as people evolve. Today as a 28 year old woman who has been dating my partner for 4 years, I don’t see a lot of value in getting married. We are already living together, fight just like how my mom and dad fought, and if there weren’t financial benefits to getting married, I don’t think we ever would. Maybe we still won’t. Ten years ago I would have been shocked to hear myself think such things. In going to a small, religious college, one of the sayings on campus was that all ladies had to ‘get a ring by spring’ in order to graduate. It was a very hostile environment to date in, as dating was supposed to lead towards marriage. My worldview now is so far removed from that notion because I’ve changed and what</i></p>		

<i>I find importance has changed.</i>		
How do you identify your sexual orientation?	What knowledge do you have of the spectrum within sexual orientations?	How do your values provide a basis for what you believe is right and wrong in thinking about the different sexual orientations?
<i>I have to admit that my knowledge in the spectrum of sexual orientations is limited. It's growing slowly. I feel like it is constantly changing and there are new words that come up all the time. I'm good when people identify themselves with the known clear boundaries of gay, lesbian, or bisexual. But even with these identities, there are subcultures and specific ways individuals want to categorize themselves. I find that it is best just to ask, instead of assuming or labeling the person. I have found that most times the person is happy that I am asking and will end up sharing personal information with me. But asking is hard and it does take a certain level of being able to read the situation in knowing if it is appropriate. Sometimes it's not and that is okay. I wish I knew more about transgender issues. I think it is an area that confuses and scares people. I think it's interesting and I think it deserves a separate attention.</i>		
What do you do when someone that you come across says something inappropriate?	What were your initial thoughts when you discovered that men have relationships with men and vice verses for women?	Why do same-sex couples want to get married? What benefits do heterosexual couples receive in marriage?
<i>I was confused. I didn't know how two women could be together sexually or two men could be together, which tells me that I think all relationships must have an element of sex in them, or at least appeal, but that can't be true because relationships take many forms based on the parameters set upon by the people involved. Very much like a child, my initial thoughts wanted to know about the mechanics involved. I wasn't thinking about the framework or values within the relationship, I could figure that all out, once I truly understood how the couple would have sex. I know I wasn't grossed out by two women being romantic. As an undergraduate English major, homosexuality was discussed heavily as a hidden theme in the books that we read. So in some ways I have always found homosexuality to be romantic or fantastical. But as I can see now, this also means that I might consider homosexuality to exist only in literature.</i>		
What do you need to feel confident in breaking up comments from people that are inappropriate?	How might homosexuality conflict with other values connected with other identities people hold? (Race, Religion, Class)	
<i>I need to know what to say, what's the most effective in making the point that their comments are inappropriate. I do not want to make them feel dumb or embarrassed, but I want them to realize the impact and significance of words. I think I could start with an 'I feel' statement, but I am not sure how effective that might be; "hey you, I feel hurt when you say that" or "hey you, when you say those words I feel disrespected." I think that might lead to another inappropriate comment. It would be different if I knew the person and was actually able to talk a little more in-depth to how their comments only continue to perpetuate a negative cycle. I think I would need to start with people I know, or start in situations where I have some kind of authority. I could then gain some experience and confidence and be more able to interpret comments from strangers.</i>		

Current Work as an Ally. Being an ally is hard. Many times I do feel people's judgment on me for why I care or advocate for an issue that does not pertain to me. In her article "A Far Better Place: Institutions as Allies," Elisa A. Lucozzi says, "An ally is someone who is willing to confront and challenge the institutional and cultural structures that support injustice. At times an ally risks personal loss to challenge those injustices" (Handbook 48). But there are things to be done and individual actions that people can take in dismantling homophobia. A personal action I created was a tumblr to highlight and profile LGBT people (living and dead), allies, and organizations. The tumblr is named Just Like Me and U (You) and can be found at: <http://justlikemeandu.tumblr.com/>. The goal is to raise awareness that the LGBT community has its own defined history, celebrate those who break the mold of heterosexism, as well as to educate young LGBT youth in understanding their history. All of the names of people that appear in bold throughout this paper can be found at Just Like Me and You (U) with photos and short profiles. I have wanted to create a tumblr for a while now. Even before I started reviewing the history, I knew that one action I could take in being an ally is to create a tumblr around LGBT people. One primary function of a tumblr is being able to repost post from other tumblrs. This allows for a high rate of exchange between the community and a great amount of potential for spreading ideas. The trick is making one's posts attractive and concise so that others will repost. The idea for me with my tumblr is to leave enough information to ignite some level of curiosity that would allow the viewer to want to go find out more about the person or organization.

In addition to the tumblr, I have been active in advising LGBT students at my current workplace. Getting to know these students has been a blast. They are vocal in sharing their fears, concerns and are eager to create change on campus. My approach for working with these

students is to make them feel comfortable around me as well as have them realize that I am a resource for them on campus. To do this, I have opened up my office space to them, given them my cell phone number for if they ever want to talk, and send them individual emails every other week. Luckily, my process is working, and I now have regular drop ins from them and I feel they are beginning to trust me. Most of these students are active in the college's GLBT club. At the weekly meetings I have found that some of the older club members have a historical framework of the movement, but an overwhelming majority of the younger students do not have a clue of their community's past. My goal in working with this club is to give them pieces of historical information, hoping to inspire them to start exploring the history, and advocate with them and for them as a staff member at the college.

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

In closing, the U.S. society is full of oppressed groups, which leads to multiple opportunities for allies. For me the past four years in CCT, has given me insight into realizing where my passion lies. I have discovered where I want to put forth continuing effort and energy in working with LGBT groups. In being an ally, I hope this paper leads other to take action for a minority group, in their own unique ways, in their own lives. Concluding, I ask, "Where can you be an ally in your life?"

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