Important Definitions

Homosexual:
A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex.

The common and accepted term for homosexual males.

Lesbian:
The common and accepted term for homosexual females.

Bisexual:
A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same, as well as members of the opposite sex.

Heterosexual:
A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex.

Heterosexism:
Sexual orientation prejudice, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice - backed by institutional power - which subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

Heterosexual Privilege:
Those benefits derived automatically by being Heterosexual that are denied to homosexuals and bisexuals.

Homophobia:
The irrational fear of homosexuals or homosexuality, or any behavior, belief or attitude believed to indicate homosexuality or tolerance of homosexuality. In extreme cases, behavior includes violence.

Institutional Oppression:
Arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc.

Internalized Oppression:
The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

In the Closet:
May refer to a homosexual who has not yet accepted their own sexuality (to be "in the closet" to one's self). Also may refer to one who chooses not to share their sexuality with friends, co-workers, or society (to be "in the closet" to everyone).

Coming Out:
Referring to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality (to "come out" to one's self). Also referring to the process by which one shares one's sexuality with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.). This process is a continual, life long process for homosexual and bisexual individuals.