

Being Closeted for a Day

Many lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals are forced to hide their sexual identities for fear of prejudice and discrimination. However, having to conceal such a central part of oneself is not only extremely difficult and stressful, but also confining and, at times, suffocating. To demonstrate the challenges faced by “closeted” lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, try to go through a day without disclosing or inferring your own sexual identity. This means not revealing the gender of a partner and, in most cases, not acknowledging that you have a partner at all. It means not showing public displays of affection, and if you are heterosexual, not wearing a wedding ring or taking advantage of spousal benefits, such as family memberships or discounts. It may also mean not being able to discuss where you have gone, if the place is identified with people of a specific sexual identity, or with whom.

Please reflect on the following questions after a day of being closeted:

- How did it feel to have to be secretive and constantly aware of instances when you disclose your sexual identity?
- When did you find it most and least difficult to conceal your sexual identity?
- Did anyone question your failure to acknowledge a partner or their gender?
- What did you learn from this exercise?