



## Anti-Homophobia in Sport Exhibition 2012

*celebrating Inclusiveness – combating Prejudice*

### **Introduction to the topic of homophobia and homophobic bullying**

***Imagine living your whole life hiding who you are. Making up stories about who you spent the weekend with. Being careful who sees you where with whom. You think you'd go bonkers, wouldn't you?***

But that's exactly what millions of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) around the world do every day. They have to lie or pretend to feel safe.

It's because of *homophobia and transphobia* – fear of same sex relationships or any challenge to mainstream heterosexuality.

Throughout history LGBT people have faced negative attitudes. In some places, they've been killed, tortured, faced violence, outcast from their families or lost their jobs just because of who they love.

A 21-year-old university student Matthew Shepard became the symbol for a campaign against gay hate crime in the US when he was savagely beaten 14 years ago, tied to a fence, crucifixion style, and left to die slowly over more than 18 hours. You can read more about this barbaric incident and its related source, anti-gay 'labels,' at: <http://ahs-exhibition2012.co.uk/pdfs/Panel%20Three.pdf>

There have always been, and always will be, a small minority of people who feel they were born gay or lesbian or bisexual or in the wrong gender and need to express themselves. They're not asking anyone who isn't homosexual to change their sexuality. All they want is to be able to love someone who loves them back. To be who they are.

#### **Why's that so threatening?**

Attitudes *are* improving. More and more public figures are coming out as gay or lesbian or transgender. Lots of young people feel more able to be true to themselves. And many straight people are accepting of LGBT friends.

One academic, Professor Eric Anderson, says homophobia comes from rigid ideas of what's male and what's not. He talks about "*homo-hysteria*": when straight men feel they have prove they're not gay.

But it's changing. Professor Anderson says "*inclusive masculinity*" is emerging: young men in the UK and US are rejecting the idea they've got to be super macho. Because they're not so pressured to prove that they're not gay, they don't have to act



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homophobic. Instead, they feel freer to support other males, to hug them, show affection and open up about their feelings.

As acceptance grows, so do links worldwide. LGBT people in the UK and other western countries are using the internet, the media, the arts and social networking to link up with LGBT people in other countries who're bravely speaking out.

Indian film maker Parvez Sharma's brave documentary *A Jihad for Love* about homosexual Muslims has reached 8 million people. International campaigns have been launched against "corrective" rape to cure lesbians in Ecuador and South Africa.

## **About Trans individuals and transphobia:**

A person who believes they are born the wrong gender e.g. transgender --someone in a male body who believes they are female, or vice versa; but also individuals whose way of dress [transvestism, etc] and or how they feel about their gender identity crosses the gender divide. You can read more about trans individuals and transphobia on PDF 6: <http://ahs-exhibition2012.co.uk/pdfs/Panel%20Six.pdf>

## **Questions:**

- What did you grow up hearing about gays? Lesbians? Bisexuals? Trans-people?
- Have any celebrities coming out changed your view of LGBT people?