

Homosexuals lack help, understanding

by Joannell Ackerman
Nebraskan Staff Writer

When a class discussion touches on the topic of homosexuality, it makes at least one University student uncomfortable.

This student would like to contribute his own views to the discussion. But he knows that he cannot. Since he is a homosexual, being found out is the last thing that he would want to happen.

"Once, I wrote a paper on this subject for a class assignment," he said. "I wanted to put more information into the paper than I did. But I couldn't because it would be dangerous."

THIS STUDENT cannot have a name. He consented to an interview "after much soul searching and because I feel that I have something to say." It was a rare opportunity to candidly discuss his homosexuality with another person since, as he says, there "are so very few people that I can trust."

His story may or may not be typical of other homosexual students. He is trying to change; some do not want to.

"Being the way I am has caused me unhappiness. I want out," he said. "There was a time when I did not accept myself for what I was. It almost wrecked my life."

"Now I accept myself as a homosexual and am trying to modify my behavior toward heterosexuality — whether partial or complete."

HE HAS HAD psychiatric treatment, but the "cure" is not easy. It is no easier to turn a homosexual into a heterosexual than it would be to reverse the process and make a heterosexual into a homosexual.

Among students the reaction to homosexuality tends toward indifference.

"I don't care about homosexuals one way or the other — as long as they don't bother me." Or, "Homosexuals? I thought that they all lived in California" are typical comments.

"People tend to view the problem as 'not my concern' and 'found somewhere else,'" said the student interviewed for this article. "But the problem could be as near as the person sitting next to you in class."

HE HAS NOT found it too difficult to find homosexual friends.

"We seem to have a conditioned sense toward each other. There are ways of seeking out a friendship," he said. "The biggest thing is the grapevine. It's no different than any other social thing."

He has been able to find a homosexual society wherever he goes. There is one here. There is one everywhere, he said.

There are two gay bars in Omaha which serve as meeting places. The student used to go there before he decided to change his behavior. The bars are for the "hunted and the haunted."

HOMOSEXUALS USUALLY "put on a big show for the straight people who come to the bars to watch," he said. But, most of them resent these "tourists."

Homosexuals resent other things. "I dislike poor, crude remarks because I cannot defend myself. I have to remain silent," he said, ad-

ding that the word "queer" does not bring up much of a response in him anymore.

He does not like people who cannot understand why homosexuals do not get help. They should check around and find out what a small amount of help is available, he said.

THEN THERE ARE the people who think homosexual relations are "something dirty" and would resolve the situation by requiring homosexuals to abstain from relations.

"I challenge these people to go month after month without any sexual outlets — either physical or psychological. If they can do this, then, they can tell a homosexual to quit," he said. He resents the negative attitude of society and religion. The law declares homosexual relations between consenting adults illegal. The church makes it a sin.

"Doctors try to pacify the homosexual so that he can function in the society that rejects him. One doctor told me that I should keep telling myself, 'I am what I am.' How does this help me change my behavior?"

The homosexual's problem is "an immensely complex one" with psychological, social and ethical implications.

DR. LOUIS MARTIN, psychiatrist at Student Health, cautions against talking about a homosexual as a distinct kind of being.

"Identifying homosexuals as a group is a tremendous oversimplification. That is like making a group out of all of the students who drive blue cars. Any general statement about these students as a group would be distorted. The same applies when homosexuals are classed as a group," he said.

There is no distinct dividing line between heterosexual and homosexual.

In a clinical sense everyone has some form of homosexual urge, Martin says. He does not define homosexuality as a set of urges. Rather, a homosexual is a person who, "for whatever reasons, engages frequently in homosexual behavior."

ACCORDING TO Dr. James K. Cole, assistant professor of psychology, society has three ways of looking at homosexuality—as a moral judgment, as an illness or descriptively as a type of behavior that a minority of society engage in.

Too often the person who labels homosexuality a disease is actually making a moral judgment. Illness is connected with badness, Cole said.

Even some psychologists label homosexuality as a mental illness. Cole disagrees because "personal psychological problems may or may not be related to the homosexual condition."

Martin views the debate over whether or not homosexuality is an illness as a "meaningless semantic hassle."

"HOMOSEXUALITY IS not a completely normal psychophysical development. But it certainly is not an illness in the sense that pneumonia or heart disease is," he said.

The Nebraska statutes subscribe to both the moral judgment and illness theories. Under a vague "crimes against

nature" classification, sodomy is made a felony with a maximum penalty of up to 20 years in prison.

Under the sexual psychopath provision, a person committing a homosexual act could be confined in a mental institution for life.

THE AMERICAN Law Institute's Model Penal Code recommends that homosexual behavior, between consenting adults in private, should no longer be a criminal offense. So far Illinois (1961) is the only state to have adopted such a law reform.

Most states, including Nebraska, have laws against adultery and fornication. Though these laws are not enforceable, law enforcement agencies do send out plainclothesmen decoys who dress, walk and act as they think homosexuals do for the sole purpose of enticing a homosexual solicitation.

Such an incident was reported in a Sept. 23, 1968 news story in the Lincoln Star.

During a 4-week period, Lincoln police "attempted to reduce problems caused by homosexuals frequenting city parks" through entrapment activities. Officers said that they were approached by 15 men and that they started "a file on suspicious people and cars" for future use.

IN THE story one of the officers is quoted as saying, "Homosexuals sometimes make advances to children and in incidents in other cities, have murdered children after sexually attacking them. We don't intend for that to happen in Lincoln."

The notion that homosexuals are child molesters is one of several misconceptions.

Dr. Louis Crompton, president of the Lincoln-Omaha Council on Religion and the Homosexual, says that a homosexual rarely bothers another person unless he thinks that person is also a homosexual.

The Rev. Dr. Alan Pickering of the United Ministries for High Education says that there are "three to five times more heterosexuals involved in child molesting cases."

PICKERING, WHO has counseled both male and female homosexuals, says that he finds "negative, naive ideas about homosexuals everywhere I go — even among psychologists."

People seem to think that "what homosexuals do together is so peculiar that this behavior affects them differently than the heterosexual behavior between two people," he said.

"What homosexuals do together" is

essentially mutual masturbation and some oral-genital relations, Pickering said.

As to the question of anal intercourse Pickering's comment is that before the development of modern contraception such relations were practiced among a substantial number of heterosexuals.

ACCORDING TO authorities, the other forms of sex play are more common among homosexuals than anal intercourse.

Statistics regarding the prevalence of homosexuality are not satisfactory. The 1948 Kinsey report data is the closest approximation to a statistical tabulation.

According to Kinsey, four per cent of the adult male population is exclusively homosexual. And, at least 37 per cent of the male population has some homosexual experience between adolescence and old age.

As to an estimation of the number of homosexuals on the University campus, Cole who has counseled a few homosexual students said that he had no reason to believe that the number here would be any different than the national average.

MARTIN SAYS that he regularly sees homosexual patients, but that they are a relatively small per cent of the cases treated. In the two years that he has been with Student Health, he has not treated any female homosexuals.

The Rev. Raymond Hain, director of the Catholic Student Center, says that he counsels about eight or 10 homosexual males each year. In his experience, females are far less common.

"Most have had only one or two homosexual experiences and they are struggling with themselves, trying to understand why they have this quirk," he said.

The priest listens to their problems and always refers them to psychiatric help.

"THE BIGGEST problem or the student is an internal contempt for himself. He may despise himself and yet feel that he cannot be otherwise," Hain said.

Crompton feels that the "homosexual minority is the largest minority group on this campus."

"People tend to underestimate the size of the homosexual problem," he said, adding that he would estimate about 10 per cent of the American population, both male and female, are "predominantly homosexual."

Another source felt that there is "probably a b o u t 500 homosexuals" among the students and faculty here.

RUSSEL BROWN, assistant dean of student affairs, says that his office has been involved with about four homosexual cases during a three-year period.

"In these cases, the University's basic concern is helping the student deal with the situation. Sometimes this help is within the University — such as psychiatric therapy," he said.

One of the immediate problems facing a young male homosexual is the draft.

The medical questionnaire asks the applicant if he has homosexual tendencies. By answering yes and supplying sufficient documentation, the applicant is classified 4-F or 1-Y (not currently qualified, but eligible for service in case of war or a national emergency).

"BUT THIS material remains a part of his permanent record and can keep him from getting a job," Crompton said. "Most homosexuals do not declare their sexual orientation and serve without problems."

"However, the services do conduct witch hunts to expose homosexuals and such men are given undesirable discharges. Though statistics are hard to obtain, the reliable ones available indicate that only about one homosexual in 50 who enters the services receives a less-than-honorable discharge for sexual reasons," he said.

Another problem facing the homosexual student is "social isolation and a lack of social activities sponsored especially for them."

Crompton says that there are "several student homosexual groups organized and officially recognized at such places as Columbia, New York University and Cornell."

"THESE GROUPS hold social functions and campaign for law reform and policy changes that now bar homosexuals from the armed services and federal employment," he said.

Homophile groups are becoming more militant and adopting the slogan, "Gay is Good," he added.

Pickering sees the homosexual student's basic problem as one of how to cope with himself.

"I try to help them feel better about themselves. If some are eager for change, I will try to help them change. For others who want ac-

ceptance for what they are, I try to help them accept themselves without change," he said.

HE FINDS that the homosexuals he counsels are no more effeminate or masculine than any other persons.

"You cannot tell a homosexual by appearance," he said. "The ones that I have come into contact with are able, intellectually competent and talented people."

He added that homosexuals are evenly distributed across the line in all occupations and at all socio-economic levels. It is a myth that homosexuals are found only in the arts or music.

The establishment of a "meaningful, lasting relationship is a lot harder for homosexuals than heterosexuals," Martin says. Homosexuals speak of "wash-and-wear wedding gowns."

"IT IS A tough game for any person to achieve sexual maturity in an on-going relationship with another person. But it is twice as hard for a homosexual as for a heterosexual," he said.

"We know a lot about homosexuality, but a lot of what we know indicates that we may be dealing with an unchangeable phenomena," he said.

All Student Health records are governed by the ethics and legal statutes pertaining to the medical profession. The records are not subject to any University administration or investigation. The student's confidentiality is protected at all times.

Boye named editor; last paper is today

Publications Board has named Roger Boye of Lincoln as editor for first semester next year of the Daily Nebraskan. Boye is a journalism major from Lincoln and has served as business manager for the Nebraskan.

Managing editor for next fall will be Kent Cockson who worked this year as night news editor. News editor will be Jim Pedersen, who has written for three semesters on the Nebraskan. The new business manager has not yet been selected.

This issue of the Daily Nebraskan will be the last paper of the semester. The Nebraskan will resume publication the first week of the semester next September.

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