

# Gender Diversity Awareness Seminar - May 2005

## Gender Diversity Awareness Seminar

held on 7 May 2005 in Cape Town.

### Background

The whole drive behind the seminar is to inform and enlighten people about gender related topics and issues hardly ever talked about.

The larger LGBTI community, organisations and individuals find themselves in a space where greater awareness about gender diversity seriously needs to be addressed. Terminology surface daily without clear explanations or information available. The gender continuum is vast and it is not always possible to be captured with relevant terminology or description.

### {mospagebreak heading=Background&title=Aim of seminar} Aim of Seminar

The seminar is presented to achieve the following:

- To narrow the gap that exist between people, to promote a better understanding for those who are different from us, by providing information and removing misconceptions and barriers specifically related to diverse gender identification and expressions.
- To enable professional people that serve the LGBTI community to obtain first hand knowledge through conversation and interaction.
- To provide information and an awareness as to where information could be obtained
- To promote an appreciation for the differences amongst ourselves, and to embrace our own uniqueness and that of others.

### {mospagebreak title=Seminar Overview}Seminar Overview

With the support of Good Hope Metropolitan Community Church (GHMCC) the first seminar was held on 7 May 2005 with huge success.

I prepared myself that about 20 people would attend the seminar, but actually on this Saturday morning 43 people registered - double the amount of people I bargained for!

The attendees were seated in circles, in order to be comfortable for a whole day of group discussions. There were five guest speakers, who all contributed to a full day of information. The way I planned the programme was to create a safe space for communication between the people attending, and the people who shared their stories (guest speakers).

### {mospagebreak title=Format of the day}Format of the Day

The first speaker got chance to share a story, might it be their own real life experience of more informative, e.g. ID Documentation and different view points on gender expression.

Then the groups of people had time to discuss among themselves, on the story they just have heard. Each group, then could formulate some questions which could then be asked to the guest speaker.

After each session a tea break followed. The day was designed like this, in order to give people a chance to "take in" as much as possible information, and to give them time to think about what they just heard.

There was a lot of new concepts, words, terminology and new ways of expression. It was a lot of information, and therefore I wanted to create a way of absorbing all these new expressions/definitions.

Around the hall was a selection of self-painted posters, with some quotations and ideas. At the back of the hall was a variety of suggested books for further reading.

The day turned out to be an eye-opener experience for everyone who attended.

### {mospagebreak title=Guest speakers}Guest Speakers

The guest speakers in order of the programme: Estian Smit

Estian Smit is a Phd Student at the University of the Western Cape. Estian works on issues of body diversity and South African Law. Estian was also involved in the 2003 parliamentary process in an effort to make the "Alteration of Sex Description and Sex Status Act" a more transgendered-friendly piece of legislation. Christine Botha

Christine (Name changed) discovered during a life-long search that her struggle with gender issues was not a psychological, spiritual or social one, but in effect a physiological one. Sally Gross

Sally's life has been one of many struggles to transcend boundaries and stereotypes. Sally was born intersexed, a term used to cover a range of conditions in which one cannot be neatly defined as one sex or the other.

Despite this ambiguity, Sally's family raised her as a male. Sally's struggle was not only against Apartheid - which forced her to flee the country, but also gender demands from her Jewish faith, later on Catholic Priesthood.

When Sally wanted to return to South Africa, her ambiguous gender caused such confusion for the Department of Home Affairs that it took 15 months of pressure to have her passport and ID re-instated, or even to get official confirmation that she had been born ...Lincoln Theo

Lincoln is the core course convenor at AFDA, the South African School of Motion Pictures and Live Performance Medium, and also qualified and practiced as an attorney.

He then worked in the film industry for some years, and submitted his masters dissertation on "Whiteness and Maleness" through UCT's African Studies Department. He is preparing his PhD proposal in film narrative. Dr Eve

Dr Eve (website: [www.dreve.co.za](http://www.dreve.co.za)) is a couple and sex therapist and clinical sexologist in private practice, who did her Doctorate in Human Sexuality in San Francisco.

She presents papers on aspects of human sexuality and relationships at national and international conferences and seminars. She has run workshops in Kenya and Nigeria. She is also particularly devoted to doing workshops with the youth throughout South Africa.

Dr Eve holds a post as part-time lecturer at the Medical School of the University of Cape Town. She continues into her 11th year in radio and was nominated "Woman of the Year" in the Health Category in 2002. She publishes articles in national and international academic journals and is consulted as expert by local as well as international magazines.