Surviving sexually oriented bias incidents: The experiences of homosexually active men

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SURVIVING SEXUALLY ORIENTED BIAS INCIDENTS: THE
EXPERIENCES OF HOMOSEXUALLY ACTIVE MEN

BY

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USE OF THESIS

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Abstract

Discrimination, persecution, violence and harassment of certain groups are not a new phenomenon. Legend has described the formation of groups who have been known to persecute others, such as Jews, blacks, religious orders, as a means of protecting the dominant views of society. Homosexually active men have been reported as being one such group that has been persecuted over time due exclusively to their sexual orientation. The purpose of this structured, descriptive study, was to describe the experience of what it feels like to be violated, harassed, persecuted or discriminated against due to sexual orientation, as well as to seek to explain homosexually active men's post-incident action. By adopting a phenomenological approach that focuses on the individual's lived experience, examining his thoughts, feelings, stresses and behaviours, this research moves beyond the findings of quantitative studies already reported. By offering a detailed description of the personal experiences of survivors, this study has identified the multi-directional and multi-leveled reactions experienced following any bias incident. The phenomenological approach has allowed for a more in-depth examination of the lived experience; identifying that survivors experience immediate emotional reaction, long term reactions and resulting behavioural practices as a result of the incident experienced. In noting the reactions reported in previous studies, this research has extended this knowledge and reports how these reactions are multifaceted and have different foci for different men. In addition to highlighting the dimensions and seriousness of the problem, this study provides information to those responsible for social, political and educational change.

Declaration

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgment, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text".

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study was stimulated by an increasing number of reports describing violence,

harassment, discrimination and persecution directed towards homosexually active

men[1] and the difficulties these men experienced following any such incident (Cox,

1994, Griffin, 1994, Hatcher, 1990). It was further shaped by the author's

experiences growing up as a gay male and in particular by two violent episodes.

> I was in my late teens and was employed as a photographic
> assistant by a family friend, a married man with five children. I
> was invited to attend a photographic conference with him which
> extended over three days. On the first evening in the motel he made
> sexual advances towards me which I refused. He then physically
> attacked me for about 45 minutes after he tied me to the bed. I
> suffered a broken nose, a cut above my eye, a cut lip, a broken rib,
> extensive bruising to my back and deep cuts to my arms from the
> belts he used to tie me up. I was then raped.
>
> Being very insecure and unsure of my own sexuality I did not know
> what to do. Too afraid to do anything, I did not resist his sexual
> advances over the next two nights.
> To this day I don't know why I didn't tell someone or do something
> immediately. I guess I must have felt ashamed or that I had
> provoked it in some way.
>
> On my return home I told my parents who immediately took me to
> the police and hospital. The police dealt with it clinically; the

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[1] The term homosexually active men has been adopted for this study to include men who identify
as gay and with the gay community, and also to include men who do not identify as gay or do not
identify with the gay community but who from time to time have sex with other men.

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hospital dealt with it physically; but no one dealt with me emotionally.

I proceeded to court where he was found guilty of physical assault and three counts of sexual assault against a minor. The judge concluded that in view of the fact that his wife and children had left him that was punishment enough.

It was years later that I gathered the courage to seek counselling to deal with the issues that continued to haunt me. To this day I would have difficulty in advising someone to go through the court process. It was the most humiliating experience of my life (Mansell and Robinson, 1995, p.1).

The second event occurred many years later, at a time when the author was more understanding of his sexual orientation and open to friends and family.

It was a wonderful January summer's evening in Perth and I had decided to go for a walk along the picturesque Swan River as it was too hot to sleep. The river was a-buzz with families prawning, children playing, and lovers walking arm and arm along the foreshore.

Having spent some hours lying on the grass reading I decided to amble home. Crossing over the freeway I was walking through a small park which is known to be frequented by men seeking sex with other men. As I was walking through, a man I judged to be in his fifties, approached me shouting abuse. Ignoring this I continued on my way. Not content with being ignored, this man then came running at me at which time I heard the blade of his flick knife. Frightened, I turned to see what was happening as he lashed out, cutting my upper arm with the knife. Fearing for my life I mustered every amount of strength and energy I could and ran. Hoping to raise assistance I shouted 'fire' as I went. I never stopped to see if assistance was forthcoming.

Once home I cleaned my wounds and sat reflecting on the events. There were many emotions running through my heart and head. The strongest, however, was that no one would believe that I was not out looking for sex. Although unjustified, I again felt ashamed, as if I must have provoked the attack.

As a nurse I did not feel comfortable seeking medical attention for my laceration, knowing the medical profession's lack of compassion towards gay men. Therefore, alone and without anaesthetic, I sutured my wound myself.

Anger set in much later, and with it fear that this man may see fit to attack other people enjoying the evening by the river. I resolved that I had to report the incident to the police. Making the initial phone call was difficult as history told me not to trust the police.

My experience with the responding officers, however, was nothing but reassuring. Their professionalism, attitude and manner were comforting and I felt no judgement being placed on me.

Whilst they were not able to apprehend the culprit, my doubts in the justice system had been eased. I now felt that in order to gain safety within society one must report events.

Reflecting on these experiences caused the author to question the emotional experiences of other homosexually active men. What is the lived experience of these men? [2] How does it impact on their post assault actions? Why do so many homosexually active men seem reluctant to report these experiences?

To find answers to these questions, the author decided to ask homosexually active men to tell of their experiences, to describe their feelings, to discuss their responses to those feelings and how those feeling impacted on them. In this way it was expected that a clearer understanding of their experiences would be established; reflecting their reality in such a way would help make that reality clearer to others. Furthermore, it would help identify areas that required attention by social, political, judicial and educational organisations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyse in a structured descriptive way the experiences of homosexually active men who had survived sexually oriented bias incidents[3] and to explain the post incident action adopted. The application of a phenomenological approach was to enable the research to go beyond the quantitative data. This approach focused on the individual's lived experience, including his feelings, thoughts, motives, stresses and strains. In doing so, the study would demonstrate and go some way towards filling gaps in the current knowledge, and provide a bank of qualitative data as the starting point for further research.

Objectives

1. - To document and describe sexually oriented bias incidents against homosexually active men.

2. - To explore and analyse the lived experiences of homosexually active men following any perceived sexually oriented bias incident.

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[2] The lived experience is described as being any incident or life event experienced by the individual.

[3] Much of the research describes physical and verbal assaults against homosexually active men as 'hate crimes' (Craig and Waldo, 1996). Whilst they are often assaults motivated by hate, some studies have implied that this is not always the case. Some assaults are motivated by perpetrator's need to dominate those whom they see as vulnerable. For these reasons, this study has opted not to use this term. Additionally, some of the incidents that are narrated by participants are not crimes in the state of Western Australia, therefore, it is not appropriate to call them 'crimes'. Because of this, the term 'bias incident' will be used as it encompasses all areas of violence, harassment, discrimination and persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation.

3. - To report the action taken by homosexually active men following any sexually oriented bias incident.

4. - To seek to explain the post incident action adopted by men who have experienced sexually oriented bias incidents.

Background literature

Persecution of certain groups is not a new phenomenon. Historically the phenomenon has seen the creation of groups known to persecute others as a means of protecting the dominant views of society. Records describe how gypsies, Jews, gay men and lesbians have been systematically beaten and murdered for years. These anecdotes do not appear to have decreased over time; for as we approach a new millennium we continue to see atrocities being imposed upon communities in Kosovo, on Jews, blacks, homosexually active men and lesbians.

Sometimes the persecution is illegal but frequently it is encouraged under law. Examining the treatment of homosexually active men, Boswell, in Herek (1992, p.1) discusses thirteenth century legislation proscribing sodomy as indecent, punishable by "castration, torture and death". The image of men being forced to wear pink triangles during the Nazi domination of World War II, where thousands of homosexually active men are reported to have died, is one that continues to create fear for those whose sexual orientation differs from that of the heterosexual majority (Adam, 1987).

Australian history reports that the arrival of European travellers brought with it laws that treated sodomy as a criminal offence, punishable by death. The first documentation of this is in 1727 when two Dutch sailors were found guilty of sodomy in Western Australia. Their sentence of death was carried out by exiling them to two islands without food and water. The first recorded execution in New South Wales was in 1796 when a man was found guilty of sodomy and sentenced to hang. These atrocities continued until 1839 from which time other criminal sanctions were imposed (French, 1993).

Twentieth century events that remain prominent in the minds of many Australian gay and lesbian individuals are the incidences of violence and harassment in the 1980's which surrounded what was to become known as the "darlo days" (Goddard, 1990, p.19). At that time "police routinely arrested gay men in order to beat them up" (Goddard, 1990, p.19) and the term 'police officer' was to become known as "a national byword for brutality, in-uniform drunkenness, corruption and disregard for ordinary human rights" (Goddard, 1990, p.3).

With such persecution and discrimination, the majority of homosexually active men choose invisibility as an option, rather than facing possible oppression or violence. Gays and Lesbians Against Discrimination (GLAD) (1994) have reported that an increasing number of men are now disclosing their sexual orientation, however, they state that there remains a large number who choose not

to disclose. The decision to be open about one's sexual orientation and risk the possible alienation of family and friends, possible discrimination in the workplace, loss of access to children, and exposure to violence, is one many men avoid by concealing their sexuality. The outcome of this non-disclosure results in a community having too few numbers to lobby for change. This dilemma of remaining invisible (with the hope that one will be free of persecution and discrimination), or being open about one's sexual orientation (and risking aggressive behaviour), was one addressed by members of the gay liberation movement.

Many gay people recognised the importance of visibility in overcoming violence within their society (Comstock, 1991). They believed that 'openness' would lead to understanding and acceptance. The difficulties associated with self-affirmation of one's homosexuality, coupled with the lack of role models for homosexua: / active men, has meant that the evolution of a visible community that openly announces its sexual orientation has been slow.

One historical event that saw a dramatic change regarding the visibility of gay people around the world was the murder of Harvey Milk (San Francisco's first openly gay supervisor) by Dan White in 1978. Milk, believing that he might one day be murdered because of his sexual orientation, recorded a number of personal taped messages, one of which stated, "If a bullet should enter my brain, let that

bullet destroy every closet door" (Shilts, 1982, p. 372). Milk's message, coupled with the perceived light sentence of White[4], stirred many into opening their closet doors and uniting as a community to fight the bias that had imprisoned them for centuries. Far from resulting in understanding and acceptance however, greater visibility has, in the short term, resulted in greater exposure to sexually oriented bias incidences.

The focus of literature has been on 'hate crimes' rather than sexually oriented bias incidences towards homosexually active men[5]. The Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Task Force reported a 34% increase in violence towards gay men and lesbians from 1983 to 1984, and a 66% increase from 1986 to 1987 (Gross, Aurand, and Adessa, cited in Eerrill, 1990). The Los Angeles Human Relations Commission documented the number of victims of sexually oriented hate crimes known to them as increasing from 61 in 1988 to 86 in 1989 (Hatcher, 1990). New York reported an annual increase of respondents reporting at least one incident of anti-gay violence as increasing from 64 in 1985 to 84 in 1990 (Dean, Wu and Martin, 1991, p. 57). More recently the 1993 survey of six American cities; Denver, Chicago, San Francisco, Portland, New York and Minnneapolis, reported an increase from 1,577 in 1992 to 1,921 in 1993 (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force [NGLTF]).

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[4] Dan White was sentenced to seven years and eight months for the murder of Harvey Milk. He served six years prior to being paroled.
[5] There is a growing literature on hate crimes towards gay men and lesbians, especially in the United States of America, however, there is little data on the broader issue of bias incidents.

There are only limited comparative figures for Australia. Van de Ven, Kippax, Crawford, Race and Rodden (1998) have conducted one national study that has identified the experiences of homosexually active men who have experienced HIV-related abuse and discrimination. This research is the first Australian study that has focused its collection nationally rather than in individual states or territories. Interviewing 3039 homosexually active men, Van de Ven et al. reported that 1233 (40.6%) have experienced HIV-related abuse or discrimination.

In addition to the study by Van de Ven et al. (1998) there have been eight studies that have examined violence and discrimination towards gay men and lesbians in four Australian States. The Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project in New South Wales has conducted three of these studies. Their most recent identifies an increase in reported violence against their focus groups from 67 responses in 1988/1989 to 94 responses in 1992/1993 (Cox, 1994).

Another study was commissioned by the New South Wales Police Service in 1994, and published in 1995. Titled *Out of the Blue* its aim was to examine key aspects of violence and harassment against gay men and lesbians. The findings of this study showed that the level of physical assault experienced by gay men and lesbians in a 12 month period was significantly higher than that of the general community. This study highlighted that 57% of gay and lesbian respondents had experienced some form of personal or property crime or harassment. This

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compares to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey *Crime and Safety Australia* 1993 which showed 1.9% of women and 3.3% of men in Sydney had been survivors of assault, threatened or actual, over a 12 month period (Sandroussi and Thompson, p. 9). A fifth study carried out in New South Wales schools reports that 59% of respondents reported verbal harassment, 21% reported threats of violence, and 18% reported incidents of physical violence (Griffin, 1994).

Examining discrimination and violence towards gay men and lesbians in Victoria, GLAD reported that of the 1002 gay men and lesbians surveyed, 70% of lesbians and 69% of gay men had been "verbally abused, threatened or bashed" (GLAD, 1994, p. 18).

The key findings of a South Australian study concur with these studies of New South Wales and Victoria. The study, which examined violence towards gay men and lesbians and issues surrounding reporting of such experiences, identified that 49% of respondents indicated that they were survivors of hate crimes (Baird, Mason, and Purcell, 1994).

An eighth Australian study into violence and harassment was conducted by the Australian Capital Territories Gay and Lesbian Police Liaison Network which reported 60% of all respondents had experienced harassment in the Australian Capital Territories (Gould, 1994).

It is recognised that these figures are small compared with the gay population in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra, and with recent American figures (NGLTF, 1993). They should not, however, be dismissed. Cox (1994) reports that the difficulty in reaching the population coupled with the reluctance of men to report incidents are factors that must be considered when interpreting the data. What is important is that these studies indicate that violence and injustice towards gay men and lesbians are occurring at an alarming rate. This could be the result of an increase in actual bias incidents being committed, of increased publicity of the issues, or of the added support offered by the Gay and Lesbian Task Force to survivors of sexually oriented bias incidents. More detailed research is necessary to discover the relative influences.

It is evident in examining American and Australian studies into bias incidents against homosexually active men that a problem exists. Australian studies (Cox, 1990; Cox, 1994; GLAD, 1994; Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995; Van de Ven et al., 1998) have identified the same upward trend of reported incidents identified by American studies (Dean, et al., 1992; Gross, Aurand, and Adessa, 1988; NGLTF, 1994). Proportionately, the numbers in Australia are not yet as high as in America, however, the reality is that these acts are happening at an increasing rate.

The reported increase in bias incidents towards gay men, both overseas and in Australia, (Cox, 1994; NGLTF, 1993) can be interpreted as stemming from an increase in the number of incidents. Alternatively, this increase of reported incidents can be identified as a result of a greater awareness of the issues, or better services available for men to report incidences. What has been shown, however, is that governments or other authorities have done little to address, document or prevent the continuation of such incidences. As with the AIDS pandemic in the 1980's, the impression of many within the gay community is that officials are either unaware of the issues or simply perceive it as "just a gay problem and therefore not of concern to all society" (Anti-Gay Violence, 1987, p.3). The failure to recognise and address issues surrounding sexually oriented bias incidents towards homosexually active men has created an environment where verbal, physical and mental abuse can flourish unidentified and unquestioned.

It is well established, then, that homosexually active men are being subjected to acts of violence and aggression. What is not clear is whether men who do not identify with the gay culture, but have had sex with other men, also experience bias incidents, and what do we know of the thoughts, feeling, and actions of this particular group of men post incident?

Twenty years ago researchers involved in the women's movement were asking similar questions. What they revealed was that society expressed horror at the

violence reported in the media, but continued to support violence in movies and on television, and accepted the violent themes portrayed by some children's toys (especially those intended for boys). This reinforces the attitude that on one hand, society condemns violence, but on the other hand, condones aggressive acts. The result of such attitudes is that violence becomes a normal part of life and is therefore normalised, thus reducing individuals' sensitivity to its destructive effects and presenting it as acceptable (Dixon, Manners and Prout, 1993).

Comparisons can be made between issues of violence and aggression towards women and homosexually active men. The apparent absence of official government concern for homosexually active men who have experienced sexually oriented bias incidents allows perpetrators to go unpunished, as did the failure of previous governments to define domestic violence as a public concern (Steinman, 1991; Stets, 1988). The need to understand the feelings, thoughts, emotions, and the essence of their experience, is identified as important when examining both areas.

Whilst there is ample quantitative research to demonstrate that bias incidents are occurring, qualitative studies that would provide a greater understanding of these incidents is missing. Further research is needed in an attempt to identify the pervasiveness and impact of bias incidents. This must not just focus on gay men but on all homosexually active men, including those who do not identify with the

gay community. More importantly, the research needs to be expanded in order to achieve a greater understanding of the individual's personal experiences, feelings, opinions, beliefs and actions, as this will allow for a greater understanding of the phenomenon. To document the number of incidents is important, but even more important is the need to understand the psychological effect upon the individual who has been violated, for without this data it will not be possible to assist men to overcome the emotional turmoil being experienced.

An extensive review of the literature reveals that there has been limited qualitative research into bias incidents towards homosexually active men. The literature does reveal that a good foundation has been laid regarding the incidences of sexually oriented bias, therefore, this study, will extend the knowledge by asking homosexually active men: what is the lived experience of surviving any sexually oriented bias incident?

Significance of this study

The significance of this research is that it will attempt to fill gaps left by previous studies that have only focused on gay men. This approach goes beyond the focus on gay men to include all homosexually active men, whether or not they identify themselves as gay. As well as providing information on the extent of the reported problem, it will provide detailed descriptions of the personal experiences of homosexually active men. By doing this it will highlight the dimensions of the problem for both the individual and for society. Thus, the studies will not only

make an original contribution to knowledge, but also will go some way towards addressing the problems associated with surviving any sexually oriented bias incident.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter Two addresses the issues of homophobia and heterosexism and the impact these issues have on homosexually active men. It will also examine each Australian State's legislation governing homosexuality and discrimination, providing a broader picture of the issues facing homosexually active men. This is followed by Chapter Three, which introduces a review of the previous studies on hate crimes and bias incidents perpetrated towards homosexually active men.

Chapter Four will provide an explanation of the research philosophy adopted for this study; including a description of the research design, population sample, data collection, data analysis, limitations of the study, validity and ethical considerations.

Chapters Five to Eight offer a detailed description of the study findings, including narratives taken from recorded interviews. This will be followed by Chapter Nine which offers a summary of the findings from the viewpoint of a composite man; that is a composite picture of the experiences of these homosexually active men.

Following the description and summary of the research findings, Chapter Ten

offers a discussion on the findings reached from the research. Chapter Eleven is a

reflection on the findings. Finally, Chapter Twelve will discuss the implications

and issues raised from this research coupled with the researcher's

recommendations.

Chapter Two

Homosexuality/Homophobia/Heterosexism

Introduction

The introduction to this thesis defined a sexually oriented bias incident as any

incident of violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution that is perpetrated

against a person because of his or her actual, or perceived, sexual orientation. In

documenting and describing these incidents and exploring the lived experience of

the participants, it is necessary to examine what motivates such incidents and to

clarify their impact on homosexually active men.

Homosexuality was first classified among the sociopathic disorders in the

American Psychiatric Association's (1952) publication -- *Diagnostic and*

Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). This classification allowed

authorities (and society) to consider, describe and treat homosexuality as a mental

disorder, despite the expressions of comfort or wellbeing about their sexual

orientation made by gay men and lesbians. In labelling homosexuality as a

sociopathic disorder, the DSM reinforced the need for 'treatments', such as shock

treatment and psychoanalyses, to 'cure' men and women of this disorder.

The second edition of the DSM in 1968 saw the reclassification of homosexuality from a sociopathic disorder to a sexual deviation, listed in the nonpsychotic disorders. This category included those men and women who gained sexual gratification from objects rather than individuals of the opposite sex; from acts not usually associated with coitus, and from acts involving sexual intercourse under bizarre circumstances (O'Donohue and Caselles, 1993).

The 1973 edition saw homosexuality finally removed from the DSM. Whilst this might be seen as a positive move towards an acknowledgment that homosexuality was not a mental disorder, some questioned whether the medical fraternity truly believed this (O'Donohue and Caselles, 1993). By removing the listing, was this to mean that the treatments were to stop, and gay men and lesbians would be allowed to pursue life as homosexuals? Bayer (1981) believed that this might not be the outcome, as the rationale for change had not stemmed from scientific findings or attitudinal change, but rather from pressure applied by social and political bodies.

With the removal of homosexuality as a disorder from the DSM, researchers altered their focus in homosexual studies from attempting to discover a cure for the 'disease', to addressing individual's and societal negative attitudes towards homosexuality and homosexuals. The perception now was that it was negative attitudes towards homosexuals that were creating the problems (Forstein, 1988;

O'Donohue and Caselles, 1993). Consequently, homosexuality was identified by some researchers as a healthy lifestyle and the focus for further research was on negative attitudes towards homosexuality.

In keeping with this approach, the term 'homophobia' was created by Weinberg (1972, p. 4) who described it as "the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals". Decades of research have continued to adopt this term, for want of a suitable alternative, although many have made attempts to redefine its meaning. MacDonald (1976, p. 23) described homophobia as an "irrational, persistent fear or dread of homosexuals". Others, such as Pharr (1991, p. 8) defined it as "the irrational fear and hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex". Whatever the definition, recent researchers (Bhugra 1987; Herek, 1992; Mason, 1995) have identified that the use of the term 'homophobic' is problematic. Firstly, homophobia is not clinically a phobia (Bhugra, 1987). The emotional components of phobias are fears which are considered to be excessive or unreasonable, however, homophobia relates to feelings of hatred or anger that are seen to be justified. Secondly, the term homophobia focuses on a mental health model which examines what is wrong with the individual, rather than on the social-structural problems (Herek, 1984).

Negative attitudes towards homosexuals do exist in society and do influence behaviour. Many homosexual issues are not considered as topics for investigation

or discussion as gay men and lesbians are not seen as fitting into the 'natural order' or structure of a society which is based primarily on the notion of a family unit, traditional moral values, and gender roles. The avoidance of the issues, coupled with the focus on a heterosexual value system, has given rise to the more apt term heterosexism. Heterosexism is the basis of homophobia. It is defined by Herek (1992, p. 89) as an "ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community". Furthermore, heterosexists believe that all members of society are, or should be, heterosexual (Herek, 1992).

When examining heterosexism, like other forms of subjugation, it is important to investigate both society's cultural perspectives and the individual's psychological perspectives. Cultural perspectives (known as cultural heterosexism) refer to societal customs[4] and institutions[5]. Psychological perspectives (known as psychological heterosexism) refer to the individual's attitudes and behaviours.

Cultural heterosexism

The upsurge of heterosexism can be seen to have been perpetuated by the failure of the major institutions (religious, legal, media and psychiatry/psychology) to take a positive stand on homosexuality. It is their failure to 'speak out' and support the

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[4] Examples of societal customs are wedding ceremonies, publications of births and publicly acceptable displays of heterosexual affection.
[5] Example of institutions are religion and judicial systems.

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gay and lesbian lifestyle as a healthy alternative that has allowed society to condemn or defame it. This inaction has created a homosexual community that continues to remain concealed.

Religion

Religious orders have played a major role in the perpetuation of the invisible homosexual. Their severely limited paradigms of righteous lifestyles continue to emphasise the merit of heterosexual marriage and family over all alternatives (Gramick and Furey, 1988). This is exemplified in the 1986 statement released by the Vatican, which proclaimed that;

> ...when civil legislation is introduced to protect behaviour to which no one has any conceivable right, neither the Church nor society at large should be surprised when other distorted notions and practices gain ground, and irrational and violent reactions increase (cited in Gramick and Furey, 1988, p. 5-6).

The same document goes on to denounce homosexuality "as ordered towards an intrinsic moral evil" (Gramick and Furey, p. 2). Many religious orders appear to have adopted this approach, and openly denounce the homosexual lifestyle while condoning hostility from many of society's members as well as their own religious leaders.

Legal system

There are a number of countries in which discrimination, persecution and harassment against gay men and lesbians is not legislated against. Although governments have begun to respond to hate crimes and other discrimination

motivated by ethnic, racial, and religious prejudices; official condemnation of discrimination against gay men and lesbians has been minimal or non-existent.

In Australia, New South Wales is perhaps the most progressive state in dealing with legal issues regarding the discrimination and persecution of homosexual people. The 1982 amendments to their Anti-Discrimination Act saw changes which make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of homosexuality in the areas of employment, education, the provision of goods and services, accommodation and registered clubs. New South Wales is also the only state in Australia which provides legislation protecting homosexual people against vilification (Tiddy, 1995).

Where New South Wales legislation chooses to include only homosexuality in its definition, South Australia has extended its definition in its 1984 Equal Opportunity Act (1984), to include homosexuality, bisexuality, transexuality and heterosexuality (Tiddy, 1995).

Legislation in the Australian Capital Territory (1991) and the Northern Territory (1993) was modelled on that of South Australia, referring to sexuality rather than to homosexuality (Tiddy, 1995).

Queensland anti-discrimination legislation in 1991 faltered when dealing with sexuality. Apparently reluctant to address the issue directly, the government opted to pass laws making it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of "lawful sexual activity" (Tiddy, 1995, p. 10), thus denying gay men and lesbians the same recognition of sexual preferences accorded to heterosexual citizens.

Victoria's legislative changes regarding sexuality followed the definitions used by South Australia -- lawful sexual activity. However, it has included the addendum that there may be exemptions to this legislation allowing for discrimination, for any reason, if employment is to involve care of children. The employer does not have to have evidence of physical, emotional or mental harm, but is simply required to believe that there is some risk in relation to the employment of that particular person (Rayner, 1995).

As Rayner (1995) highlighted in her paper, this exemption is directed at gay men and lesbians and could result in their exclusion from employment involving child care, paediatrics, nursing, teaching, social work, youth work, child counselling, driving school buses, cleaning at institutions that have children present and so on.

Presently there is no legislation in Western Australia to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexuality.

As this study focuses on homosexually active men in Western Australia it is important to further outline the development of legislation in this State which has directly or indirectly affected these men. The Western Australian Criminal Law Code was amended by the Law Reform (Decriminalisation of Sodomy) Act 1989, removing the previous ban on indecent practices between males in private places and restricting the offence to a ban in public places only (section 184). This provision is mirrored in section 203 of the Code that makes it an offence for any[1] person who wilfully and without lawful excuse does any indecent act in a public place. The need however for a separate section aimed at 'indecent' acts by gay men in public places can be construed at worst, as discriminatory, and at best as unnecessary. Furthermore, the age of consent in various sections of the code is different in relation to heterosexual and male (not female) homosexual encounters[2].

Laws governing physical violence in Australia do not discriminate and therefore, all homosexual people are able to pursue this legal action if subjected to any form of violence. However, antidiscrimination laws only offer some legislative protection and remedy for discrimination in five jurisdictions (with Victoria partially addressing the issue in a 6th). Presently there is no legislative protection available to homosexual people in Western Australia. There are, however,

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[1] Author's emphasis.
[2] See section 186 where age of consent for females is 16 and the age of consent for males with respect to homosexual acts is 21.

provisions within the Federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to inquire into and try to resolve complaints of discrimination.

This government action/inaction could be viewed as reinforcing the cultural heterosexist attitude that homosexual people do not deserve legal protection and justice. It could also signals to perpetrators, criminal justice personnel and the rest of society that anti-homosexual discrimination may not be punished.

Media

In maintaining and strengthening cultural heterosexism, the mass media is seen to mirror society in two ways. Firstly in its inaction when addressing issues relevant to the gay and lesbian community and secondly, by portraying gay men and lesbians from a negative perspective. In reviewing television coverage of Australia's two major gay and lesbian Mardi Gras in Sydney and Perth, the image that is given is one of perverse sex and promiscuity, not the celebration of a lifestyle and support for one another. Russo's 1981 study of Hollywood films identified that homosexual characters usually died before the end of the movie from suicide or murder. In 1984, Gross identified that when homosexual people have been portrayed in a positive manner in films or on television, they appear because of their sexuality (homosexuality being essential to the plot), and it is their sexuality rather than their daily nonsexual lives that is the focus.

Psychiatry/psychology

As identified previously, the historical evolution of homosexuality as a mental illness is long and has been coloured by brutal and inhumane treatments (O'Donohue and Caselles, 1993). Whilst it has now been removed from the APA manual, its effects have remained in the minds of many gay men and lesbians, members of the medical fraternity and society. These dominant, often patriarchal views continue to be raised by those expounding the evils of homosexual lifestyles and therefore continue to shape cultural heterosexism.

Cultural heterosexism is manifested through social institutions (religion, law, media, psychiatric/psychological institutions) and acts to restrict the visibility of homosexuality and homosexual people. With this inhibition to openly express one's 'true' self, society continues to be allowed to ignore the issues. Institutional inaction and condemnation of homosexuality then gives potential perpetrators a reason to harm or discriminate those perceived as not complying with social norms.

Psychological heterosexism

Why do many men, women and children have strong, often negative, attitudes towards homosexual people? Herek (1992) addressed this question by adapting Smith, Bruner and White's 1956 *functional approach* to examining attitudes. This approach makes the assumption that individuals exhibit attitudes because they will

achieve psychological benefit. It hypothesises that any two individuals may have completely different motivations for expressing what seem to be identical attitudes.

In using the functional approach when examining attitudes towards homosexuality, Herek reported four principle psychological functions. The first of these is an experiential schematic (Herek 1984), later modified as an *experiential function* (Herek, 1992). This function stems from the understanding that individuals rely on past experiences or exposure (in this case to homosexual people) when formulating their attitudinal responses. If someone has experienced positive contact with a homosexual person, then they will have a positive attitude towards him or her. Those who have negative exposure were reported to have a negative attitude. It is these positive or negative experiential attitudes that help the individuals to comprehend their past experiences and place them into a larger world view, based on their own self-interest (Herek, 1992).

The second psychological function identified by Herek is the *anticipatory function*. Herek identified that 70% of Americans have not personally met a homosexual person (as far as they are aware), and therefore have not formed experiential attitudes towards him or her. Their anticipatory function then relates to their anticipation of interaction with homosexuals in the future. As with experiential function, anticipatory function aids the understanding of the world and assists in

the acquisition of skills so as to increase rewards and decrease negative experiences. The effect of anticipatory attitudes is that individuals who do not have actual experiences on which to form attitudes see homosexual people as symbols (evil beings, mentally unstable, deviants) of what they themselves are not. Whereas those who are able to form attitudes from experiences are then able to organise or make sense of their thoughts, those who do not have personal experiences are not. Instead, symbolic attitudinal development works to aid individuals in developing self-esteem by asserting aspects of their own being, by proclaiming what sort of a person they are. In order to do this, individuals are often required to distance themselves from, or even denounce others who represent the person the individual is not (Herek, 1992).

Herek fails to identify on what basis the individual forms these symbols of homosexual people. This issue, however, has been studied by Ehrlich (1990) who reports that the primary agents of socialisation, that is the parental family, pass on prejudices. Ehrlich's theory of prejudice concludes, "parents communicate attitudes often as explicitly as they teach the child other modes of behaviour" (1990, p. 360). He also asserts that parents are able to influence attitudinal development by controlling opportunities and experiences. This conclusion adds strength to Herek's research by expounding the effects of socialisation in childhood when forming these positive or negative symbols of homosexual people.

The third psychological function identified was the *social identity function*. In dividing this area into two categories, Herek labelled the first value-expressive function and the second, social expression. The value-expressive function focuses on the individual's affirmation of beliefs, positive or negative, that are related to one's own self-concept. For example, one person expressed the opinion that people should be allowed to "live and let live" (Herek, 1992, p. 153), whereas another described the need to oppose homosexuality as this was "an integral part of being a good Christian" (Herek, 1992, p. 154).

The second component of social identity function is social-expression. This function is borne of the need to belong to a particular group. In affirming one's place, individuals are then able to gain acceptance, approval, or affection from those who are important. In adhering to the group's expression of acceptance or non-acceptance of homosexual people, the accord that is gained augments one's own self esteem.

The final attitudinal function that furthers the view of homosexual people as symbols, is the *ego-defensive function*. Here Herek identified the defensive attitudinal approach adopted by individuals when confronted by "unconscious psychological conflicts such as those surrounding sexuality or gender"(Herek, 1992, p. 155). The essence of this function is guided by the sentiment that

heterosexuals, who assert negative attitudes towards homosexual people, do so out of concern for their own sexual orientation.

These final three components, value-expressive, social-expressive and ego-defensive are functions which encompass prejudicial attitudes directed towards homosexual men and women as they enable individuals to direct their animosity towards the symbol of what they are not. By labelling their own feelings and emotions as unacceptable, they then project a negative response to those around them. This may be experienced by members of the gay and lesbian community directly, by way of violence, harassment, persecution, but is seen by the individual as ensuring continued membership of his or her own group.

The effect of heterosexism on both the target community (the gay and lesbian community) and the general community is immense. It encourages negativity and a lack of respect by heterosexual people towards homosexual people and strengthens the invisibility of the homosexual community. Both psychological heterosexism and cultural heterosexism should concern all of society. The tolerance of such practices perpetuates the continuation of prejudice, discrimination and violence and serves only to make homosexual people retreat to the safety of their locked closet doors.

The effects of heterosexism on homosexually active men.

Heterosexism does not always manifest itself in physical violence, but takes many forms, vilification, discrimination, harassment and persecution. Its impact on homosexually active men, however, can be enormous. Surviving such attacks can result in emotional stresses and social difficulties (Van de Ven, 1994). The impacts most regularly cited include violations of personal dignity, choices and freedom to pursue personal and professional goals (D'Augelli, 1992); social withdrawal (Gonsiorek, 1988); low self esteem, emotional problems, substance abuse, self destructive behaviours and suicide (D'Augelli, 1992; Van de Ven, 1994); violation of personal dignity and lack of academic achievements (Sears 1991). The effect of heterosexism also has a large impact that reaches beyond the immediate survivor. These men experience emotional upheavals, more over, society also is affected.

The target community, that is the gay and lesbian community the survivor may associate with, is directly affected. Whilst many gay men may offer sympathy or empathy to the survivor, they may also view the attack as a threat to them personally. The result is the spread of fear, anger, isolation and intimidation beyond the immediate survivor, his friends and family, to those who share the same sexual orientation. Many men may adopt the same emotional responses because they identify as being one who has sex with another men and they therefore fear similar violence, harassment or discrimination. This sense of being

wronged may then spread to other social responses such as anger directed at the individual or group with which the immediate offenders are rightly or wrongly identified. This form of retribution is generated by generalised concerns and anger over lawlessness and the perceived reluctance of law enforcement agencies to act on complaints (Lawrence, 1994).

With these feelings of unrest within the target community, a level of isolation is evoked which then has a cumulative effect throughout the general community. The impact of surviving a bias incident may lead to the survivor withdrawing himself from society for fear of more experiences or of repercussions. Coupled with this personal isolation is a societal isolation as sympathetic supporters withdraw their support for fear of placing themselves in harm's way (knowing or being with that person may attract harm). This isolation not only hurts the person, but harms the community (Gonsiorek, 1988; Levin, 1993). By first documenting individual men's experiences it enables researchers to gain an understanding of the complexities of the issues. Armed with this data it is then possible to bring it to the attention of government offices, police and organisational bodies, allowing for moves to be made to action policies which will aid and support the target community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, heterosexism, both cultural and psychological, can have serious and crippling effects on gay men and reduces the perspective of what is human. It can

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also extend to the immediate community in which they live, as well as the wider community, by leading to a narrow society with implications for other forms of denial, discrimination and persecution. The creation of a more tolerant society that supports difference and diversity will allow the creation of a resilient society by fostering understanding of the width and breadth of human potential.

Chapter Three

Review of Previous Studies

Introduction

Review of the literature in phenomenological research can differ from that of other research methods. In most qualitative studies the review is a precursor to data collection. In ethnographic research the literature review provides a background for conducting a study. In historical research the literature is reviewed to develop research questions and then becomes a source of data. Phenomenological research, however, offers three approaches. One can choose between: (1) the researcher completing a comprehensive search and review before data collection so as to guide observations; (2) the researcher not accessing the literature prior to data collection lest it distracts him/her and distorts analysis; (3) the researcher undertaking a critical evaluation of previous works that is then used selectively (Field and Morse, 1990).

It was the view of this researcher that a comprehensive review of previous studies should be completed prior to commencing the data collection process. The rationale for this approach was to validate the claim that there was little or no qualitative research into the lived experience of homosexually active men who

have experienced bias incidents. Once this was ascertained the literature was used to guide the researcher in the research process.

The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to a critical review of the research studies and literature which have focused on issues associated with the crises experienced by homosexually active men who have survived a bias incident.

Description of the events

The types of incidents that are being perpetrated against homosexually active men are varied. The British study, *The Safe Neighbourhoods Unit*, (1992) reports a collection of anecdotal evidence describing verbal attacks from family members and neighbours, harassment in residential communities, harassment at work, and physical attacks. One Australian paper by Griffin (1994) reports bias incidents ranging from anonymous letters/graffiti, verbal harassment and threats of violence to actual physical violence. These types of incidents appear commonplace and are also reported as occurring throughout America by the NGLTF (1993). These include stories of murder, assaults, arson and vandalism, harassment, hate group activity, police abuse, prison violence, and AIDS[1] related violence. These three research studies from Britain, Australia and America summarise the types of incidences being perpetrated against gay men and lesbians.

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[1] Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

One of the principle shortcomings of the research is that it has focused its data collection on the gay community. The rationale for this is that it is a convenient population, as access can be gained through community groups, gay organisations, gay festivals, and gay venues (Comstock, 1989; D'Augelli, 1992; NGLTF, 1993). In conducting surveys in this manner, however, researchers are failing to address homosexually active men who do not identify with the gay community in any way[2]. Whilst it is difficult reaching individuals who remained closeted, it should be possible, provided the researcher goes beyond focusing survey advertising, question distribution, and data collection in known gay venues. In attempting to gain these men's support, it is also important to adopt a collection method that will allow them to remain completely anonymous.

The most recent Australian study to address some of these issues was reported by Van de Ven, et al., (1998). This comprehensive empirical research into homophobic and HIV[3]-related abuse and discrimination used a broad approach to recruit its participants by advertising in gay venues, but also in places of sexual contact outside the gay community including the Internet, health centres, pornography outlets and personal columns. The large national sample of 3039 men reported that "422 men (13.9%) had experienced HIV-related abuse and 1184

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[2] Some men have told family, friends and associates that they are gay or homosexual. Other men self identify as being gay or homosexual but do not disclose their sexual orientation to family or friends. There is also a community of men do not perceive themselves as gay or homosexual but still choose, on occasion, to have sex with other men. All three groups of men fit the label of being homosexually active men whether they identify with the gay community or not.

[3] Human Immunodeficiency Virus

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men (39.0%) experienced homophobic abuse. Altogether, 1233 men (40.6%) had experienced either or both types of abuse" (Van de Ven, et al., p. 147). The findings from this study substantiate other studies regarding the high levels of discrimination and abuse experienced by Australian homosexually active men. The authors also concluded that their findings were in accord with other studies that revealed that men experience multiple forms of abuse and discrimination.

This well designed research addresses many issues that have been highlighted as areas of concern in other studies. Not only did it expand its advertising beyond gay venues and events, but also offered anonymity by providing a free-call 1800 telephone number to all participants. It also ensured that male interviewers were available to complete the interviews if participants identified that they were uncomfortable with talking to female interviewers. Finally, it adopted a well structured, previously tested questionnaire to gather the information. Whilst collating a good body of data on the types of experiences these homosexually active men have been exposed to, Van de Ven et al. (1998) did not investigate the lived experiences and the mental impact of surviving them.

The mental impact on the individual

Overseas research

There have been a number of investigations into hate crimes against gay men and lesbians. As indicated in Chapter One, these studies catalogue a number of incidents while focusing on quantitative methodologies. In doing so, they fail to

address the lived experience of survivors of violence, harassment, discrimination and persecution (Comstock, 1989; Dean, et al., 1992; Herek, 1989; Herek and Berrill, 1992; Hunter, 1990; Le Blanc, 1991; NGLTF, 1994). Consequently, the mental impact of surviving such incidents remains largely unreported.

In an attempt to explore the psychological impact of experiencing harassment and violence, D'Augelli (1992) published on the mental health problems among lesbian and gay college students. This work summarised the previous quantitative studies done by the author and others (Comstock, 1991; Herek, 1989) and concluded, "based on these findings, some general predictions are possible. Heterosexism and homophobia.... and the discrimination and violence that follows - will escalate in the 1990's" (p. 254). From this, D'Augelli concluded that research and resources are essential so the physical and emotional needs of every individual can be met.

D'Augelli's (1992) quantitative work typifies many studies into lesbian and gay male harassment. Firstly it uses a 16 item Likert-type questionnaire, able to be completed in 15 minutes. The instrument had been previously tested and had good content validity. Secondly, its participants were self identifying members of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance of Pennsylvania State University who received the questionnaire at meetings, social events, lectures, films and dances that were organised for lesbians and gay men.

This well documented study of D'Augelli (1992) reports the nature of harassment and victimisation of lesbian and gay men. It also addresses some of the fears that this population experience regarding disclosure and the possibility of further exposure to violence. In his conclusion D'Augelli discusses the psychological cost borne by survivors of anti-lesbian/gay violence; the "emotional stress, social difficulties, and academic problems" (D'Augelli, 1992, p. 293). This conclusion went some way towards understanding what men and women have experienced.

Building on his 1992 findings, D'Augelli and Pilkington (1995) examined the victimisation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in community settings. This sound empirical study examined three broad areas of victimisation. The first area was the prevalence of various kinds of bias motivated victimisation. The second, the specific social and community context in which victimisation occurred. Finally, the third area concerned correlates of victimisation including the age at which different aspects of sexual orientation development occurred, concealability of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, sex and fears for personal safety. The study concluded that moderate correlations were observed between general psychological distress and three measures of victimisation. However, inasmuch as this study, and others like it, identifies the association between victimisation and mental health, they fail to address the lived experience as recounted by the individual. The adoption of quantitative methods to collect and collate data

restricts the participants from openly expressing their feelings and thoughts following the incident.

One qualitative study that warrants attention is that of Miller (1978). Miller interviewed homosexual fathers who are or have been married, have fathered children and presently are involved in a parental role. The focus of this research was lifestyle, however there was some emphasis on victimisation and the emotional responses that followed.

Miller's study adhered to a phenomenological design using in-depth, semi-structured interviews that allowed the men to express their feelings about living as homosexual fathers and about the victimisation they had experienced. What Miller identified was that being victimised in the course of pursuing socially devalued goals produced feelings of guilt and shame, two men reported having considered suicide. Miller also identified that the father's pain from the victimisation was heightened further by feelings of being powerless to right the wrong. This compounded to what was described as multiple victimisation.

Miller's study offered some support to previous work by Geis (1975), Sagarin and Macnamara (1975) and Humphreys (1975) who had also examined victimisation of gay men, identifying issues of guilt and aspects of alteration in coping mechanisms. It did not report the process adopted to analyse the interview

transcripts, therefore, rigorous analysis and validation of the methodological approach was not possible.

Whilst not focusing on hate crimes perpetrated against gay men and lesbians specifically, the study reported by Barnes and Ephross (1994) focuses on the emotional and behavioural responses to hate crimes. The exploratory research design used for this study focused on interviewing and audiotaping groups of people who had reported hate crimes to the authorities. Its findings highlighted that the majority of participants experienced anger (67.8%), fear (50.8%), sadness (35.6%) and suspicion of others (20.3%), following their exposure to the event. Barnes and Ephross (1994) then compared these findings to survivors of personal crimes and identified similarities. The authors also reported that the respondents did not report a decrease in self-esteem as has been reported by other studies. They concluded that self-esteem was maintained as survivors were able to attribute "responsibility for the attacks to the prejudice and racism of the perpetrators" (Barnes and Ephross, 1994, p 250). Whilst this is contrary to other studies, the emotional and behavioural responses identified were considered to have a major impact on the individual, requiring closer attention by social and legal agencies. The main criticism this author places on this study is that the analysis was limited, as it did not expand on the themes identified. Whilst Barnes and Ephross identified that fear, anger and sadness where identifiable components of surviving

an incident, they did not expand on what these reactions meant to the individuals, nor did they suggest how they impacted on them.

In further examining the mental health consequences of experiencing any bias incident, Maroney (1994) comments on emotional reactions, principally post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This paper reports that all crime victims are likely to experience PTSD and that it is compounded by psychological stresses such as social isolation, internalised homophobia, decreased self esteem, loss of control, shame, guilt, depression, and suicidal behaviour. Maroney concludes that survivors of bias crimes blame themselves for the violence because of who they are. This serves to further isolate themselves from significant others, services, and the community. Whilst this is not a research study, it does encompass other studies which have examined the condition of PTSD and relates it to those who have experienced violence because of sexual orientation.

Garnets, Herek and Levy (1992) did further reporting on the mental health consequences of violence and victimisation against gay men and lesbians. The authors state that;

> American gay people as a group might be expected to manifest significantly higher levels of psychological distress and impairment than heterosexuals. Yet this is not the case; the lesbian and gay male community does not differ significantly in mental health from the heterosexual population....the survivors of anti-gay victimization [should be viewed as] active, problem solving individuals who are potentially capable of coping with

the aftermath of the attack and using the experience as an opportunity for growth (1992, p.208).

The paper presented by Garnet et al. (1992) is not a research study and has made its assumption on readily available studies from other researchers. The context from which these authors have based their assumptions is that the effect of victimisation will depend on the survivor's stage of coming out.

Examining the issue of coming out, Cass (1979, 1984) concludes that men and women who have worked through the process have already faced a major threat to their self-esteem, and as a result are stronger emotionally. This 'strength' allows them to deal with future crises which may confront them. If, however, individuals have not come out or are still going through the process of coming out when they experience violence or discrimination, they may undergo greater emotional crises than one who has completed the coming out process (Garnets, et al., 1992).

The concept of coming out, put forward by Cass, (1974, 1984) and supported by Troiden (1989), suggests that it is dependent on negotiating a series of linear steps in order to achieve a final stage whereby personal acceptability as a gay person signifies the completion of the coming out process. Completion of this linear process enables homosexually active men to deal with negative experiences better. Mcleod and Nott (1994) and MacDonald (1996) question this process. MacDonald suggests that coming out signifies an "ongoing process that continues throughout an individual's lifetime.... that coming out is an ongoing experiential learning,

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personal exploration and evaluation and reevaluation as the process continues throughout a person's lifetime" (1996, p. 191).

These two theories of coming out raise questions regarding survivors' ability to negotiate their experience. Cass (1974, 1984) and Troiden's (1989) concept of coming out does not agree with Mcleod and Nott (1994) and MacDonald (1996) when focusing on the issues of surviving bias incidents. Would Mcleod and Nott (1994) and Macdonald's (1996) concept be more appropriate: that coming out is an ongoing experiential learning exploration that allows homosexually active men to develop their own coping strategies by negotiating their own personal experiences. This issue will be addressed in later chapters.

There now appears to be considerable consensus that emotional changes are central to the experience of crime. In Frieze, Hymer and Greenberg's (1987) review, beliefs about self, safety and justice were the central themes. Greenberg, Ruback and Westcott (1983) also proposed that beliefs about inequality and vulnerability are the sources of survivor's distress. Perhaps one of the most outstanding assertions is that of Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983, reported in Norris and Kaniasty, 1991) who assert that victimisation shatters three basic assumptions; the illusion of vulnerability, the view of oneself in a positive light, and the perception of the world as a meaningful place. Barnes and Ephross (1994), however, refute

these findings, as discussed earlier, and assert that survivors of hate crimes do not express a decrease in self-esteem.

The literature has reported the issues related to hate crimes perpetrated against gay men and lesbians, and in doing so has identified a number of resulting factors (Comstock, 1989; D'Augelli, 1992; NGLTF, 1993; Van de Ven, et al., 1998). In documenting the increasing number of incidents it has highlighted that exposure to this type of incident is impacting physically and emotionally on those being exposed to it. More importantly, many of these studies have concluded that the problem is on the increase and much more research is required to fully address all the issues.

Australian research

Research into the lived experience of homosexually active men in Australia has been limited. All but one study has focused on quantitative collection methods (Cox, 1994; GLAD, 1994; Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project, 1992; Sandrousi and Thompson, 1995; Van de Ven, et al., 1998; Ward, nd). This approach, whilst supplying excellent data on the extent of the problem in Australian States, has limited the research to the emotional consequences of the lived experiences of homosexually active men. In addition to this, the problem with some Australian studies is that they are not published reports, therefore, critical evaluation is difficult (Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Ward, nd).

The Baird, et al. (1994) study, *The Police and You*, describes itself as a qualitative study examining the experiences of lesbian and gay men. Its reporting however, adopts a quantitative method for data collation with only minimal qualitative analysis. The study documents anecdotal evidence from survivors, but does not present any detailed analysis of the themes that emerged from this evidence, however, it does propose a number of conclusions as to themes that have been identified.

All Australian studies have concluded that the incidences of violence and harassment are occurring in each Australian State (Cox, 1994; GLAD, 1994; Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project, 1992; Sandrousi and Thompson, 1995; Van de Ven, et al., 1998; Ward, nd). In their conclusions they concur with the overseas studies in that these events are having increasing emotional effects on those men concerned. Like other studies, however, the majority of these Australian studies have focused data collection in metropolitan gay venues and events. Therefore they have not gained access to those men who do not frequent such places, or who do not identify with the community whose members do attend these events.

These studies have also not expressly examined the emotional consequences of surviving any bias incident. Like many other studies they have made comment on

the issues without fully gathering all the evidence from their participants. Furthermore, like their overseas counterparts, the Australian studies have maintained their focus on violence, harassment and in some cases, discrimination, and have not addressed the complex issue of persecution (Cox, 1994; GLAD, 1994; Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project, 1992; Sandrousi and Thompson, 1995; Van de Ven, et al., 1998; Ward, nd).

Another difficulty identified is that many of these studies vary greatly in the quality of the data collected, method of data collection and the way that the data is reported. This issue is most evident when examining the extensive review of research conducted by Berrill (1992). Important issues identified by Berrill (1992), and ratified by Herek, Gillis, Cogan and Glunt (1997), and this researcher, suggests that whilst many studies were reported in published formats, data about others were from community organisation media releases. As a result, critical evaluation of the surveys' methodological approach, data collection, questionnaire structure and sample size was not reported. Because of the variation in reporting procedures and the consequent difficulties in reviewing the quality of many of the studies it has been identified that much more rigorous research is required to look at issues surrounding bias incidents.

There is, however, some suggestion in the literature from Australia, North America and Britain that those who have survived a negative incident will develop negative

views about themselves (Comstock, 1989; D'Augelli, 1992; Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project, 1992; NGLTF, 1993; Sandrousi and Thompson, 1995; Van de Ven, et al., 1998). The issues surrounding negative views, however, has not been fully explored by all studies. When examining the issues related to homosexually active men, many studies discussed have inferred that surviving a bias incident evokes feelings of fear, depression, internalised homophobia, stress, suicidal tendencies, decreased self image and guilt. However, they have not examined these issues in a qualitative manner. It is evident that these issues now need to be examined in more detail. It is no longer acceptable to hypothesise that these are the emotional responses. The research now needs to move on and ask the homosexually active men to describe their lived experience and the impact it has had on them.

Consequences of experiencing any incident

Berrill and Herek (1990) suggest that experiencing any form of bias incident not only has an impact on the emotional state of the individual but also affects the way they may think, act or behave. When individuals experience bias or crime related to sexual orientation, a disruption in their internal equilibrium occurs. They experience self-doubts about themselves as members of the greater social structure. They view themselves as being vulnerable to further attacks, unacceptable as a functioning member within society, and not welcome by the greater community. This 'secondary victimisation' occurs when the individual experiences

indifference, rejection, and stigmatisation by friends, family, community agencies and society. These feelings result in survivors experiencing many emotional upheavals. This is summarised by Levin (1993) who cites the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence National Victimization Survey (Winter, 1991-92) as reporting that bias-type victimisations produce 21% more psychological symptoms and defensive behavioural changes in survivors than non bias crimes.

The GLAD (1994) empirical study focuses its report on documenting statistical profiles on the nature of attacks, however, it also goes on to comment on some of the emotional components. Whilst not focusing on the mental impact of experiencing a bias incident, it does state that fear of discrimination becomes an overwhelming part of life, leading to self-exclusion and self-censoring. The result of self-censorship, GLAD concludes, is that the individual experiences constant frustration, stress, and "difficulties involved in maintaining a facade" (p.13).

Another consequence of surviving an incident centers on the issue of having to disclose their sexual orientation to another person and the possibility of rejection and/or more violence, harassment or persecution. Many researchers (Bolton, Morris, and MacEachron, 1989; Dimock, 1988; Dimock and Bear, 1988; Finkelhor, 1984, 1986; Lew, 1988; Struve, 1989, 1990) examining issues of sexual abuse against males have argued persuasively that cultural norms are a major barrier to unearthing male victims. Therefore, when examining disclosure the

issue of the self-reliant male, that is, the image the male has been taught to emulate, is very evident. Male socialisation, the process by which boys learn to be male, teaches male children to believe they should be strong and unemotional, and that they should not be physically or emotionally vulnerable. To admit experiencing an emotional crisis because of an incident, therefore, is to acknowledge that one does not live up to the stereotype of the self-reliant male. If he admits to experiencing physical or emotional pain, then he is admitting to being emotionally vulnerable (Perry, 1993).

For many men, admitting that they have been exposed to some sort of bias incident and that it has had an impact on them emotionally is often seen as failing to be a 'real' man. Bound by many cultural forces regarding attitudes towards homosexuality, men find it difficult to disclose their feelings as it may expose them to further bias. These complex issues need to be further addressed when examining the issues surrounding homosexually active men who have not only experienced a criminal event such as a violent attack, but also for those men who have experienced the often subtle but painful experiences of harassment, discrimination and persecution (Barnes and Ephross, 1994).

These cultural forces are compounded within society by negative attitudes towards homosexuals. The avoidance of homosexual issues coupled with the focus on a heterosexual value system has given rise to heterosexism. This is best defined by

Herek (1992, p. 89) as an "ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community". As with sexism and racism, which holds one gender or race as superior to another, heterosexism asserts that homosexuals are inferior to heterosexuals. Furthermore, heterosexists believe that all members of society are, or should be, heterosexual (Siegal, 1979). These societal views inhibit homosexually active men in disclosing bias incidents to anyone, friend, family or police officer.

Research has made advances into the effects of various types of personal crime. Now is the time for research to delve deeper into the impact of bias incidents perpetrated against homosexually active men and how it affects its survivors, and the way they interact with others around them.

Reporting acts of bias.

The literature reports that crime in general and bias incidents in particular are underreported (Berk, Boyd and Hamner, 1992; Berrill and Herek, 1990). Statistically lesbians and gay men have demonstrated this in a number of studies on the reporting rates of bias incidents. Comstock (1989) reported a 73% failure rate of reporting by gay men and lesbians. The *8 in 10* study by Le Blanc (1991) reported that only 14% (114 of 798) reported to police following a violent episode. In Australia, a study commissioned by the New South Wales Police Department

identified that 82% of respondents did not report attacks. The *Off Our Backs Report* found that 88% of gay men and women failed to report to the police (Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995). Cox (1994) reports in the *Count and Counter Report* of 1992, 50% of respondents reported to the police, however, in the 1993 *Count and Counter Report* this number dropped to 36.2%. This low reporting rate is confirmed in the Adelaide study by Baird et al. (1994) who documented that of the lesbians requiring police assistance 53% did not seek it, and of the gay men 20% did not seek it.

One reason identified for the failure of men to report incidents is the fear of disclosure to friends, family, employers, or work colleagues. Our culture provides no room for men as victims[4]. Men are not supposed to be victimised (Lew, 1988). When disclosure of the event to another does occur, homosexually active men have to be aware that the person to whom they are disclosing can be affected by these values and will use them to judge (Perry, 1993).

One of the most frequently cited reasons for gay men and lesbians not reporting bias incidents is fear of secondary victimisation. They fear that the police will respond to the individual in a negative manner; that they will experience physical abuse from the police; and that the police will not address the complaint in a confidential manner thus publicly disclosing the sexual orientation of the

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[4] There are a large number of community organisations and support networks readily established for women, however, there are no such organisations established for homosexually active men.

individual (Berrill, 1990; Comstock, 1989). The justification for these fears stems from historical events; the reported mistreatment by police, violence by police, harassment by police and perceived failure of police to respond appropriately.

Some people do not report because they believe the event was not serious enough to warrant reporting. The New South Wales *Out of the Blue* Report identifies 41% of respondents as believing their incident was not serious enough (Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995). The report questions the belief that nothing could be done and asks if that indicates a lack of understanding or confidence in the role of the police in preventing crimes. Miller (1978) also reported this phenomenon in his study of fathers who have sex with men. That study detected that few fathers reported the incident to police as they believed the case to be unsolvable, or they perceived that the response would be unsympathetic. It was also identified that the fathers believed the experience greatly diminished their self-confidence, therefore, they lacked the emotional strength to pursue any charges.

These studies indicate that gay men are reluctant to report to the police for a number of reasons including a belief that the police would do nothing or would not take the report seriously, a dislike or even distrust of the police and embarrassment about the incident (Baird, et al., 1994; Cox, 1994; Dean et al., 1992; GLAD, 1994; Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1994; Hatcher, 1990; NGLTF, 1994; Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995). These studies however, have not extended their analysis to

examine how failure to report impacts on the men. The question to be answered by this study therefore is, what do homosexually active men experience as a result of not reporting?

Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this review to present a critical overview of the status of contemporary research in the area of homosexually active men experiencing bias incidents. The review has shown that there are very few studies that have examined the lived experience of homosexually active men.

The use of quantitative data collection methodologies has established a sound body of knowledge regarding the increasing number of incidents that are reported in Australia, North America and Britain. What this review has also identified is that the research has focused its data collection on men who frequent gay venues and events. By focusing data collection on this convenient population, researchers have denied other homosexually active men the opportunity of reporting their experiences. They are therefore unable to generalise their results. Additionally, as many of the studies stem from community media releases, detailed analysis of their methodological and reporting process has not been possible. What is now needed are additional studies which can focus their data collection on the whole community allowing homosexually active men who live in country areas or who do not identify with the gay and lesbian community to voice their experiences.

Herek and Berrill (1992) have identified that research into anti-gay violence should use multiple measures of research methods. They state that these should include "survey questionnaires, personal interviews, objectively scored self-report measures of psychological functioning"(p. 421). They conclude that there is a need for "multivariate designs...to permit analysis of the complex interactions among many different factors" (p.421). This researcher has addressed these requirements of previous researchers by adopting a qualitative approach to examine the responses of these homosexually active men.

This study examines the issues that have impacted on the men who participated. It has also focused its data collection on a more global scale by recruiting men from both metropolitan and country regions, and from gay and non-gay avenues. In addition, it has not collected its data by using a structured questionnaire, but has adopted an open ended interview technique so as to allow participants to tell their whole story. By adopting this method of recruiting and interviewing, it has also gone some way towards adding to the body of knowledge that has been reported thus far.

Chapter Four

Research Philosophy

Introduction

For centuries academics, scientists, and philosophers have been developing

differing ways of understanding the world and its actors. Controversy, however,

has often surrounded these scholars regarding the most appropriate means by

which to gain their understanding of the world. This debate, coupled with the

search to identify the enigma that surrounds the real world, continues to create

controversy. It focuses on two radically different philosophies; logical positivism

verses humanism (Patton, 1990).

Logical positivism is intent on finding general laws. It is a structured quantitative

experimental approach dating back to the 1820's that tests and seeks answers to

hypothethetical-deductive generalisations (Patton, 1990). The positivist

philosophy bases its doctrine upon the belief that universal laws that display

fundamental peculiarities determine human behaviour. Dominant societal

approaches reflect this philosophy assuming all societal groups (eg. homosexuals)

are the same, therefore, behaviours are the same for all participants in that group,

denying human individuality.

The use of logical positivism has its place in many research projects, and using this approach has accumulated a wealth of knowledge. In order to describe, explain and predict events it frees the study from the influences of social values, social mores, human emotions, thoughts and feelings, and focuses on that which can be observed by one scientist and verified by another (Seaman, 1987). The issues being researched are seen to be totally objective and can thus be studied without the aid of personal experiences. The aim: to predict, control and generalise. Positivism focuses on developing or testing theory and uses methods to collect a body of data which is then produced in a numerical format using statistical analysis (Nay, 1993).

The humanistic philosophical approach puts people and the way that they make sense of the world first. Phenomenology is a philosophy concerned with focusing science and knowledge to have meaning and significance for human beings. Phenomenological belief creates a paradigm where humans are describable in terms of consciousness rather than behaviour. It holds that they live in a set of meaningful worlds. If we are concerned, as this researcher is, with understanding people at the human level rather than the abstract generalised level of a model, then concepts of phenomenology have much to offer.

To fully understand the issues surrounding the lived experience, a humanistic philosophy, or, 'world view' can be adopted. Humanism is an appropriate

approach because it stems from a need for society to distinguish ways to identify and deal with significant social problems; problems of violence, discrimination, war, prejudice, and relationships with minority groups (Edwards, 1969).

Humanism seeks to examine critical social dilemmas with the individuals who are experiencing the difficulties. Whilst traditional social science research strives to produce new knowledge by solving scientific questions, the goal of humanism is to produce new knowledge that both promotes practical solutions to the present dilemma and adds to general knowledge. This philosophical stream has become a systematic mode of inquiry that aims to identify issues that are important to the individual. It is not an exact science where researchers are able to control variables, for they are dealing with the human condition that is complex, diverse and unpredictable. It is also not a substitute for classical research and should not, therefore, be considered scientific or non-scientific. It does, however, identify that some human conditions cannot be measured precisely, or are too complex for the researcher to attempt to investigate using a traditional research design. Instead of complying with the strict definition of scientific research which generates the notions of "rigorous research using strict controls and precise measurement", humanism describes an inquiry which is "systematic, rational, objective, and realistic" (Tesch, 1975, p. 27).

Humanism's philosophy of realism, applied here in the sense of "taking into account the amorphism and inter-relation of reality" (Tesch, 1975, p. 32), identifies that the researcher and the participants can only do what is humanly possible; that there may need to be compromise, and that many variables are not going to be able to be controlled. Because of this, the results should never be viewed as final and conclusive; nor should they be considered generalisable. Rather than generalise results, the humanist aims to deliver a report that is transmittable. For the humanist, transmittable is not meant in the sense of the study being reproducible in its exact entirety, but transmittable by presenting a working model that demonstrates the suitability of the principle and of the method. Transmissibility also ensures that a language free of jargon is adopted, making it more accessible to the men and women in society who are affected by the issues being studied (Tesch, 1975).

Humanists believe that not all research can be conclusion oriented. Some research is better described as decision oriented and considers the intricate nature of the human condition. It is not to be used where traditional methods can be adopted, but rather when traditional research does not fit the study of the human condition. Humanism has evolved from the recognition of the need to generate knowledge about a social system, at the same time attempting to change it.

Whalley states that "the way of mind peculiar to humane studies finds its deepest

satisfaction among the clear and vivid records of human experience", that is,

records of relations between people, individuals, and groups, and between people

and the physical and moral world (Whalley, 1972, p. 444). This study has

examined experiences of survivors of sexually oriented bias incidents and the post

assault action adopted by them. In addressing the lack of Australian research to

examine bias incidents, employment of a humanistic philosophy and the

application of phenomenological methodology has focused on the individual's

lived experiences. Rather than follow traditional scientific methods of collecting

facts and commenting on them, this study has attempted to understand more

clearly the issues of those directly affected by bias incidents.

The paradigm that best suits this humanistic study when seeking to document the

thoughts, feelings, and emotions of homosexually active men is phenomenology.

Phenomenological inquiry allowed the researcher to use a qualitative/naturalistic

approach to comprehend the lived experience of those homosexually active men

participating in the study.

Phenomenological philosophy

Phenomenology can be broadly defined as "the study or description of

phenomena" (Hammond, Howarth and Keat, 1991, p. 1); phenomena being

"anything that appears or presents itself to someone" (Hammond et al., 1991, p. 1).

Phenomenology, therefore, involves the description of events as recounted by the individual, or as Taylor and Bogdan (1984, p. 8-9) describe, "what people say and do [and] how they define their world". It is the study of the lived experience that strives to place a deeper understanding of the nature of every-day experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1964; van Manen, 1990). In tendering a 'world view' approach to social research, the phenomenological perspective offers a number of different research methodologies that can be adopted. These are outlined in Appendix A.

In describing these phenomena, the researcher adheres to the principle that there is not a single reality, but that every person has his or her own reality. This reality is subjective and therefore, any experience is deemed unique to the individual (Burns and Grove, 1987). Consequently, the goal of the phenomenological study is not to explore 'reality', but each individual's perception of reality (Oiler, 1982); to examine how individuals interact with others, and how they interpret the world of which they are a part.

The phenomenological approach undertakes the task of analysing and describing the data so as to be able to interpret and understand the phenomena. Importantly, it does not apply theory of cause to its analysis, but strives to remain free of unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions (Keen 1975; Speigelberg, 1975; Taylor, 1993).

Phenomenology as a research philosophy emerged when academics began to question how best to structure studies of human action and responses (Davis, 1973). Realising that natural scientific methods did not meet all the needs of the social researcher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) cultivated the research philosophy and method -- named phenomenology. Influenced by philosophers, psychologists and sociologists, Husserl advocated that in order to understand and act upon our experiences, we must first probe those perceptions and meanings which have awakened our conscious awareness (Patton, 1990). By doing this, he advocated that the researcher would be able to give insight into the truths about reality that would otherwise not be discovered. In gaining an understanding of these experiences one is then able to discover a truth about reality.

Husserl's concept of examining the life world ('Lebenswelt') and capturing its meaning reflects an acknowledgment of the inevitability of subjectivity in any exploration or description of reality (Yung, 1993). This inevitability is not stated with docility, but with the notion that subjectivity expands and enriches the understandings of phenomena, rather than being restrained by the confines of objectivity that dominates the scientific paradigm (Munhall, 1989).

The phenomenological philosophical movement has undergone many changes through time with further review by phenomenologists such as Martin Heidegger. Primarily it is from the works of these two philosophers (Husserl and Heidegger)

that today's researchers have interpreted both the philosophy and the method of phenomenological research (Mitchell and Cody, 1993).

Bracketing

Phenomenologists maintain that intuition is important when developing knowledge, although meaning cannot be inferred from sense impression alone (Yung, 1993). Furthermore, it is important that phenomenologists remain open about any preconceived notions, expectations or preselected framework which shape the research. In addressing this issue, phenomenologists adopt the process known as bracketing, believing that in order to describe the lived experience it is first important to set aside the natural attitudes (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Bracketing one's presuppositions about the world is not performed so as to deny them or the link they play in binding individuals to the physical, social and cultural world. Rather, the process is undertaken in order to expose that link. This process of recovering original awareness has been labelled 'reduction' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

The technique of reduction is acknowledged as being a difficult and complicated process; it is, however, within the realm of human capabilities. To successfully achieve the process, the researcher is required to perceive issues from another vantagepoint. It is a reflective turn back towards experiences with a conscious effort to bracket what is already known (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

An alternate assumption is that of Heidegger who states that people are not able to bracket out pre-suppositions and values, nor would it be desirable. Heidegger is more concerned with 'being' and with time (Munhall, 1994). His notion dictates that people cannot deny the basic actuality that they always exist in the world, that the human-world interrelationship is a unity. He contends that the meanings people ascribe to their experiences are diffused between, or are extracted from, themselves and particular situations (Imeson, 1995).

Methodological approach

These differing phenomenological assumptions led Spiegelberg (1975) to conclude that phenomenology was better described as a movement rather than a rigid uniform view (Taylor, 1994). This view enabled Spiegelberg to lay the foundation for the compilation of the six steps of phenomenology that covers most phenomenological research. These are;

1. Descriptive phenomenology

   The direct investigation, analysis, and description of phenomena under investigation. It aims to remain as free as possible from preconceived expectations and presuppositions.

2. Phenomenology of the essences (essential or eidetic phenomenology)

The perception and probing of the phenomena for typical structures

or essences and for the relationship of the structure.

3. Phenomenology of appearance

This step gives attention to, or watches for, the way phenomena

appear in different perspectives or modes of clarity. That is, it

determines the distinct from the haze surrounding it.

4. Constitutive phenomenology

Exploring the way in which the phenomenon establishes itself or

takes shape in consciousness.

5. Reductive phenomenology

Detaching the phenomenon of an everyday experience from the

context of our natural living, while continuing to preserve the

context as fully and purely as possible through the use of

bracketing.

6. Hermeneutic phenomenology

The interpretation of the concealed meanings in the phenomena that

are not immediately revealed in direct investigation, analysis and

description (Omery, 1983; Taylor, 1994).

Whilst there are many approaches to phenomenology, they are all related in part.

Importantly, they are all intended to achieve the same outcome, that of

understanding the phenomena being examined. It is therefore crucial that the

researcher addresses the issues and experiences with an open mind, accepting whatever data is given. All data must be used and not ignored because of preconceived conflicts with the established criteria, operational definitions, or theoretical frameworks (Omery, 1983).

The aim of the phenomenological approach is to describe the essence, to uncover the meaning of the individual's experienced phenomena and to report it using the natural language of the event. To accomplish this, the researcher must compare, interpret and extrapolate meanings from the descriptions so as to be able to analyse the nature of the phenomena. From this, the researcher can then gain an understanding of the meaning of the experience for the participant.

In seeking to uncover the meaning of the human experienced phenomena in the way they appear through the analysis of a survivor's descriptions; this study has adhered closely to Spiegelberg's foundational process. Its appropriateness for this study is direct. It has allowed for the collection, description and interpretation of data from homosexually active men who have survived violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution and their post assault action.

Research design

In maintaining the conventions associated with qualitative research this study did not commence with a predetermined research design, nor with a predetermined

sample size (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). The aim was not to test pre-existing theory, or produce generalisable results, nor to produce information that would predict and control. Rather, the aim was to explore an area of interest, to develop a deeper understanding of what was happening and in applying a qualitative methodology, to generate new knowledge, thus producing an accurate description of the experiences of homosexually active men who have survived any type of bias incident.

Phenomenology was selected as the most appropriate research design as it enabled the researcher to gain a greater insight into the lived experience of homosexually active men in Western Australia who have experienced any form of violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution. Like all sound research methods, quantitative and qualitative, a research grounding was established by adopting the key elements required in research;

1. Identifying the phenomenon

2. Structuring the study

3. Gathering the data

4. Analysing the data

5. Describing the findings (Parse, Coyne, and Smith, 1985).

Development of interview guide and questionnaire

The interview guide (Appendix B) used for this study was developed as a tool to assist in meeting the researcher's objectives. Rather than using a structured

questionnaire which limited the participant in his responses, a semi structured guide was developed so as to procure the information required while at the same time permitting the participants freedom to respond and describe experiences. This allowed for responses (significant statements) to be extracted (coded), categorised, and formulated into clusters of themes and then examined for relationships (Yung, 1993).

The use of a flexible interview guide as opposed to a structured survey-style interview allowed the researcher to explore and illuminate particular issues surrounding experiences of bias incidents and issues related to the reporting of those experiences. It enabled the researcher to be free to further question within a subject area, to formulate questions spontaneously, at all times establishing a conversational format (Foddy, 1993).

The interview guide included three major sections. The first aimed at gathering demographic information; the second at gaining an insight into the experienced bias incident (this section included questions on the incident, on whether more than one person was involved and on personal or property damage); and the final section aimed at gaining an understanding of the post incident action adopted.

Adhering to Patton's guidelines, the researcher appreciated that participants might feel that experiences were interrelated, therefore, a conscious effort was made to word and sequence questions appropriately for each participant (Patton, 1990).

Sample selection

In accessing the population being studied, the researcher was guided by Glaser and Strauss' concepts of theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation (Strauss, 1987). It was realised that the researcher's access to participants was limited to those men who chose to participate, who were comfortable with their sexual orientation, or who were prepared to openly admit to having sex with other men. In attempting to reach beyond those who did identify with the gay community and to interview other men a broader campaign was undertaken.

To overcome the difficulty in reaching the target population (homosexually active men), both network sampling and a more widespread publicity campaign was adopted to recruit men to partake in the study. The assumption with network sampling is that friends tend to hold characteristics in common and when one individual sees the publicity, he or she will contact others who meet the criteria.

The publicity campaign used community and popular newspapers, Australian Broadcasting Commission and community radio stations, the Australian Broadcasting Commission 7-30 Report television program, poster distribution,

community organisations and social networks in metropolitan and country areas of Western Australia, gay publications, and gay venues (Appendix C). It invited homosexually active men to telephone the freecall number between the hours of 1000 and 2400 from Wednesday 5 April to Wednesday 19 April.

No figure was placed on sample size. Every person who wished to partake in the study and who met the criteria was encouraged to record his personal experience. Because anonymity was essential in data collection no member check was carried out with the survivors. To gain theoretical saturation it was important therefore to have a larger number of participants than the 8-10 individuals reported as being an appropriate number for phenomenological research (Field and Morse, 1990).

Population

The population for this study was men living in Western Australia, who self identify as homosexually active men, and who have experienced any sexually oriented bias incident. Importantly, all advertising, newspaper articles, advertisements, radio and television interviews did not refer to gay and/or bisexual men. The rationale for this centred on the belief that some men in the community identify as heterosexual, (not gay, homosexual or bisexual) however, they do have sex with other men.

Another criteria in identifying the population for this study was that they perceive the incidents were perpetrated by a person they believed not to be homosexual. The rationale for this was to avoid the confusion that could arise if men narrating incidents were to tell of domestic abuse by partners. Whilst it is recognised that this is an increasing problem for homosexually active men, it is one that deserves independent examination.

Pilot study

Two pilot studies were carried out prior to commencing the research. The first aimed at testing the use of equipment and the practicality of using a tape recorder next to a hands free telephone. The purpose was to ascertain the clarity of the tape recording and to ensure it could be transcribed. It was discovered that the recorder needed to be very close to the telephone, but not touching it as this created a slight vibration. Also identified was the importance of the researcher to refrain from tapping or bumping the desk, as this created some distorting background noises causing difficulty in transcribing.

The second pilot study tested the data collection, the questionnaire, and proposed analysis. The researcher interviewed four volunteers accessed through the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of Western Australia. All aspects of data collection, confidentiality, anonymity and analysis were adhered to so as to identify any unperceived difficulties with the research study. Problems

specifically being targeted encompassed questioning techniques, the use of machinery (tape recorder and telephone), amount of time required, and quality of recording allowing for accurate transcription.

One of the first problems identified was the researcher's tendency to counsel participants during the interview. Instead of focusing on the collection of data about the lived experience, the researcher began to focus on coping mechanisms for the individual. It was decided therefore, to compile a list of psychologists and community organisations offering support to these men. These names where then offered to each participant at the conclusion of the interview.

Another issue to arise from the pilot study was the concern by some participants that the researcher discloses whether he was gay or not. Three of the four participants in the study asked the researcher directly as they felt it was important to them. They identified reasons as being 'you will understand the language'; 'you will know what I am feeling'. It was concluded, therefore, to disclose the sexual orientation of the researcher during interviews, if asked, in the attempt to create an empathetic atmosphere in which participants could relate their experiences spontaneously.

Data collection

Collection of data was conducted from the researcher's private home by taped telephone interview (metropolitan and freecall 1800 number) following an

extensive advertising campaign throughout Western Australia. No personal

identifying details were required to be given during each interview. This

anonymous data collection method was adopted for two reasons. Firstly it was

important that all men feel free and comfortable about coming forward and

identifying that they have sex with other men without fear of ramifications or

disclosure. Secondly, it was identified that many men may never have disclosed

their experiences to anyone, therefore, face to face interviews could make it

difficult to openly express feelings, emotions and reactions to experiences. By

ensuring the anonymity of a telephone, men felt secure enough to openly express

their thoughts and emotions.

In taping all interviews, a hands free telephone was used. Recording was done,

after consent was given to tape the interview, by placing a self-reversal tape

recorder with a ninety-minute cassette next to the telephone speaker. Once the

tape recorder was started consent was again asked so as to have it documented. In

addition to this, a statement outlining his rights as a participant in the study was

read to each man.

Semi-structured interviews, ranging from 28 minutes to two hours and ten

minutes, were conducted to ascertain participant's perceptions of the lived

experience of surviving any sexually oriented bias incident. Guided by broad

open-ended questions developed by the researcher after an examination of relevant

literature in the fields of bias incidents and violence against gay men and lesbians, participants were asked, 'tell me of any incident that has happened to you which you believe was related to your sexual orientation?', 'how did this make you feel?', 'how did this affect you?'. These broad questions were followed by more specific questions, such as, 'what action did you take after the incident?' (*if reported to the police)*, 'tell me the service and attention given to you by the police when you reported the incident?' (*if not reported to the police)*, 'why did you not report the incident to the police?'. Every participant was told that his experiences were important and that it was not the intention of the researcher to limit them by simply asking specific questions. Probing questions were also used to elicit more information. Whilst these probing questions were used, every participant was allowed the latitude to move from content area to content area, covering each area in as much or as little depth as they chose.

Throughout the interview process, the researcher was aware of the importance of establishing trust and developing a rapport with the participants. He was aware that the key ingredient to sound constructive qualitative research lay in building a trusting relationship and this required the adoption of effective listening and interviewing skills. It was recognised that for any interview to be constructive it required self disclosure by the participant which would only take place when the researcher communicated an interest in understanding the participant's experience, and with the guarantee that no moral judgements were being made (Keen, 1975).

At the same time there was an awareness of the danger of becoming over-involved, influencing objectivity and introducing bias into the research. The researcher ensured that all topics were covered before the interview was concluded.

Instrumentation

Data were collected between 1000hrs on Wednesday morning April 5 and continued to 2400hrs on Wednesday 19 April, fourteen (14) days. The telephones were attended between the hours of 1000hrs and 2400hrs each day, always by the researcher to ensure confidentiality and continuity in data collection. An open ended interview schedule allowed each respondent to verbalise his experiences freely. This was to prevent participants from being restricted in their responses by closed-ended questions.

Data analysis

There has been much academic input on how best to carry out data analysis. In executing this study, the researcher incorporated advice from many phenomenological writers. (Burns and Grove, 1987; Cobb and Hagemaster, 1987; Colaizzi, 1978; Field and Morse, 1990; Glaser, 1965; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Munhall and Oiler, 1986; Omery, 1983; Patton, 1990; Seaman, 1987; Strauss, 1987; Van Maanen, 1990). Whilst there were some minor variations in recommended approaches, in general there were more similarities than differences.

The variations related to the factors associated with validity and whether the completed work was descriptive or theory. In completing this study, the researcher adopted the following framework:

At the commencement of the study the researcher set aside or 'bracketed' his personal views, knowledge and theoretical assumptions of bias incidents (Appendix D). Once acknowledged, the researcher then resisted imposing these on the emerging data. By doing this, personal biases remained separate from the interpretation of the data.

On completion of the 14 day data collection process;

1.   All audiotapes, having been labelled with date and time, had a written transcript completed by the researcher.

2.   Each audiotape was listened to whilst reading the transcript to ensure accuracy of transcription.

3.   Each audiotape was then listened to again, this time to gain an understanding of each participant's expressed or implied meanings. This also enabled the researcher to listen to the tone, the pitch, and the language used by each participant. From this the researcher was ab'e to document subjective impressions gained from listening to the audio recording, onto the written transcripts.

4.	All interview transcripts were then read carefully in order to acquire a firm understanding of their content. It is imperative that this stage be adhered to with the strictest discipline. As Parse, Coyne and Smith (1985, p. 19) state;

> Contemplative dwelling is the undistracted reading and re-reading of the descriptions with the intent to uncover the meaning of the lived experience for the subject. The contemplative dwelling frees the researcher to be open to both the tacit and explicit messages in the data.

5.	Latent and manifest content analysis as described by Fox (1982) was then used to thematically analyse each interview. Firstly, manifest content analysis was adopted to survey the transcript for phrases, words, descriptions and terms that were central to the phenomena being examined. These phrases, words and description were underlined in red pen and notes were documented in the right margin of the transcript.

6.	Following manifest content analysis, latent (unintentionally or unconsciously expressed) analysis was applied to identify and code the major intent and crucial meanings of passages and paragraphs within the context of the entire interview. Passages were examined within the context of the entire interview so as to identify and code the major thrust or intent of the section and the significant meanings within the passage (Babbie, 1979; Field and Morse, 1990; Fox, 1982; Yung, 1993). Field and Morse (1992) report this method as having a high validity for it identifies the overt intent of the information being coded, as well as an analysis of the underlying meaning in the communication. Each

identified section was highlighted in blue and notes were documented in the left margin of the transcript.

7. Meanings were then formulated to identify the significance of each statement, phrase, word or description.

8. These steps (5, 6 and 7) were completed for each interview.

9. Each transcript was then compared with each other, thus allowing for the process of grouping similar codes into categories and the identification of relationships between them to begin. Completion of this process identified that essential themes common to all participants had emerged. Themes are defined as sentences or propositions about something (Yung, 1993). Clusters of themes were then organised and referred back to the original description to ensure they did not proffer anything that was not in the original description. At no time was any data ignored or discarded.

10. Themes were identified and linked to each other allowing for the lived experience to be exposed in context.

11. An exhaustive description of the phenomenon was then made.

12. At this time employing an expert in phenomenological research methodology to review the transcripts and sort the codes into related themes completed a reliability check. The reviewer's identification and sorting of codes concurred with those of the primary researcher. This process produced a detailed description of the phenomenon. This sequence of steps is presented in diagrammatic form in Figure 1 below.

Interview

STEP 1
Written transcripts made from audiotapes

STEP 2
Confirm accuracy of transcript with audiotape

STEP 3
Identify expressed and implied meanings from audiotapes

STEP 4
Read transcripts to gain a solid understanding of the content

STEP 5
Complete manifest content analysis - make marginal notes

STEP 6
Complete latent content analysis - make marginal notes

STEP 7
Formulate significant statements, phrases, words and descriptions

STEP 8
Repeat steps 5, 6 and 7

STEP 9
Conduct comparison check with each transcript so as to group codes into major categories

STEP 10
Unravel themes and link to each other

STEP 11
Make exhaustive description of the phenomenon

STEP 12
Check validity

Figure 1 Sequence of steps for interview analysis

Reliability and Validity

Reliability depends upon consistency, stability and repeatability of the participants' descriptions and the investigator's ability to collect and record information accurately (Brink and Wood, 1989; Field and Morse, 1990). In order to establish reliability, equivalence testing was adopted.

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The principle behind such testing relies on the use of alternate form questions within the interview. For example, a cross checking question for 'how did you feel when you did not report the incident to the police?' was 'how would you describe your feelings when you did not report the incident to the police?' During analysis the researcher was then able to check participants' descriptions for consistency.

This analysis was achieved by checking each participant's description, interpretation or analysis of an event, experience or issue, to see if it was consistent with his account in some other part of the interview. Importantly, the researcher is aware that individuals can hold logically contradictory views at the same time and that these form a valid part of the account (Yung, 1993). The independent researcher who reviewed the transcripts concurred with the researcher that a high degree of consistency was apparent in all of the interviews.

Hoax respondents might possibly compromise reliability since participants were anonymous. This issue was addressed in a pilot study where two heterosexual males known to the researcher were asked to telephone in and 'make up' a story about any bias incident related to homosexual sexual identity. The researcher conducted both interviews and neither interview lasted more than six minutes as both men were unable to maintain a pretence. Both men commented that they did

not know the language to use and therefore, found it difficult to express emotions about incidents that they had not experienced. An example of this is when one man was asked 'how did you feel when you were beaten up and called a faggot?' The reply was 'pissed off'. When next asked 'I understand that you were pissed off, but can you explain to me what pissed off means to you?' the participant was unable to expand on the feelings, as he had not experienced them. It was concluded therefore that the researcher's experience as an interviewer and knowledge of homosexual culture helped to ascertain if any calls were not legitimate. Upon conclusion of the 14-day interview period it was assessed that no hoax calls had been identified. This was also validated by the independent researchers cross analysis of the transcripts.

Validity refers to findings that reflect reality, as well as the data being accurately interpreted (Field and Morse, 1990; Leininger, 1985). In addressing this issue, the researcher was constantly aware that participants might offer responses that reflect social or politically desirable outcomes. To summarise this, the researcher emphasised that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions before the commencement of the interview. Every participant was encouraged to answer as fully and as truthfully as possible. Careful phrasing of each question was undertaken in order to avoid leading the subject towards a particular answer or response (Brink and Wood, 1988).

Consent and ethical considerations

Prior to the commencement of the data collection, the Edith Cowan University Ethics Committee gave ethical approval for the Conduct of Ethical Research. Each interview took place after verbal consent to record the conversation had been obtained. (Once consent was received, recording instruments were turned on and consent asked for again, in order to have it on record). Each respondent was then advised of his rights of participation. These included;

- That all information was confidential and that no personal details would be asked for.

- That they did not have to answer questions if they chose not to.

- They could cease the interview at any time without fear of reprimand.

- They could ask for the recording machine to be stopped at any time without fear of reprimand.

- That all information was for the sole purpose of the advertised research study.

- If a name was given, it would not be identified in the reporting.

Further to the rights of participation, it was a requirement that each participant be read a statement of disclosure that, if an incident being discussed becomes the subject of an investigation the researcher may have to reveal information and its source if subpoenaed to do so (Appendix E).

Each respondent was asked to give a name by which the researcher might address him in an attempt to gain a more personal and relaxed atmosphere. They were informed that this name would not appear on any records and that pseudonyms and a coding system would be used.

The only demographic data obtained during the interview included;

- What year were you born?

- What is your race/ethnicity?

- What is your area code/home suburb?

- How would you describe your sexual identity?

    Gay....Homosexual....Bisexual....Heterosexual

All records (tape recordings, computer disks, transcription and written transcripts) have been stored in a locked cabinet in the home of the researcher and will be destroyed by incineration five years after completion of the study.

Reflections on methodology

In undertaking a phenomenological study, the researcher is required to be aware that what is central about the experience may well change as time passes. This probability is actually built into the method as the researcher conducts unstructured, open-ended questions in an attempt to qualify what has been described. Also, by asking different questions at different times of different

people, information is gathered that may have been lost on a one time standard questionnaire.

The interview process for this study was a difficult time for the researcher. Allowing only 14 days to collect the interviews placed an added pressure and did not allow the researcher to fully reflect on each interview before being required to undertake the next. It also did not allow time for all interviews to be transcribed before the next interview was recorded. Another difficulty arose when the interviewer sometimes found himself 'putting words into participants' mouths' in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of the experience. By being aware of this, the researcher was quick to re-phrase questions, using a more open ended format.

One valid criticism of phenomenological research is the researcher's imposition of his/her own interpretation or theories when analysing the data, that despite 'bracketing' biases, the researcher will determine what they expect by interpreting what the participants seem to imply. This is generally addressed in phenomenological studies by returning to the participants with the interview transcripts and asking them to validate the data.

Due to the importance of anonymity in this study, it was not possible to ask participants to validate their interview transcripts. Therefore, two alternative

mechanisms were adopted. Firstly, a greater number of interviews than is generally used in phenomenological research were conducted so as to gain theoretical saturation as a means of validation. This allowed the researcher to ensure that the themes identified were consistently appearing in the transcripts, thus, ensuring their validity. Secondly, the analysed transcripts were examined by an independent phenomenological researcher who reaffirmed that the themes identified were from the interviews and not implied.

Earlier it was discussed that the aim of phenomenological research was to describe the essence, to uncover the meaning of an individual's experienced phenomena and to report it using the natural language of the event. Perry (1993) voices a concern that in describing the essence, the research may lose its richness, that 'the method may show precisely its unity with other forms of human experience, rather than its singularity' (p. 198). This researcher agrees with this when applying phenomenological methodology to examine the lived experience. Those experiences that were particular to one participant belong to him and no one else. By organising the experiences systematically, and with the goal of completeness, this researcher believes that the 'essence' has partially been lost in the analysis. By listening to the participants' transcripts it is easier to better understand the depth of their experience. This perhaps is not a fault of the methodology, but perhaps a comment on the way that this researcher has interpreted it. By choosing to approach the subject too broadly, or by being too systematic in the approach

this researcher may have exacerbated the problem and in the process lost some of what was identified as the "true essence" (Perry, 1993).

Limitations of the study

For a number of reasons this study of homosexually active men does not claim universal application or generalisation. Firstly, as network sampling was used, participants were self-selecting, therefore, only those focused on the issues may have contacted the researcher. Other homosexually active men who feared exposure were still addressing the issues of surviving personally; or those who were not motivated to tell their experiences may not have come forward. Another group of men who may not have felt comfortable with disclosing their experiences are those who are still addressing the issue of their own sexual identity.

Secondly the application of phenomenological methodology requires a smaller sample size which allows for more in-depth interviews to be undertaken. This number, therefore, prevents any generalisation to the larger community of homosexually active men.

Another factor that prevents generalisation is related to the issue of race and ethnicity. Whilst homosexuality is represented in all races and ethnic groups, all participants in this study described themselves as white Australian males.

One other limitation surfaced after the transcripts had been analysed. It related to the issue of 'level of outness' about sexuality. It was identified that homosexually active men who were 'out' to friends and/or family were more inclined to disclose the incident to a significant other compared to those who were not. Because all participants were not asked this question, it is difficult to comment fully on the disclosure issue of bias incidents.

Despite these limitations, the richness of the data collected and the identification of major issues affecting these men in country and metropolitan Western Australia demonstrates the importance of this phenomenological method.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was not to demonstrate phenomenology in action, nor to simply describe the lived experiences of homosexually active men. Its aim was to make the experiences of homosexually active men more comprehensible so that people concerned can be empowered by that comprehension. Phenomenology was chosen as the research design most suited to gathering an insight into the lived experience of homosexually active men who have survived any sexually oriented bias incident. By conducting in-depth interviews, participants were able to define their own reality. This work is therefore situated within the phenomenological paradigm and guided by the phenomenological methodology that examines the

experiences of homosexually active men who have survived sexually oriented bias

incidents.

Chapter Five

Findings:
The Participants and the Incidents

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine and analyse the experiences of homosexually active men who have survived sexually oriented bias incidents, and seeks to explain the post incident action adopted by these individuals.

Demographic data

The data collection was undertaken by anonymous telephone interviews to the researcher. Seventy-four calls were logged over the 14-day data collection period but for various reasons only 29 were finally analysed, see Figure 2.
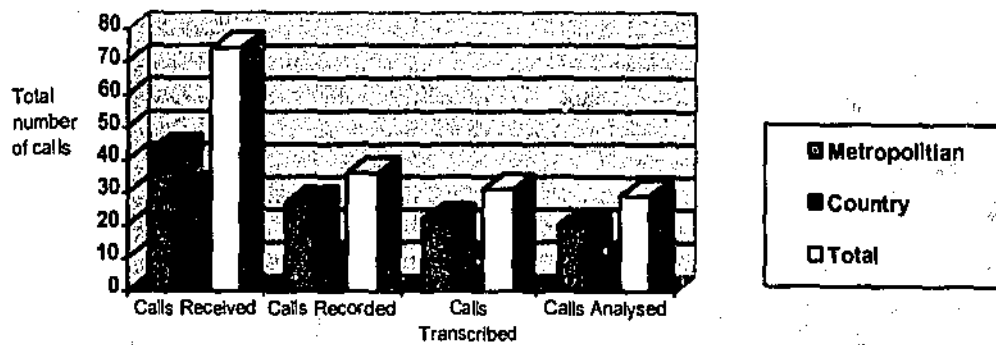
Figure 2 Origin and processing of calls received

Many of these calls were from men seeking information about the study, but, having no experiences to share, could not be interviewed.

Thirty-one respondents were from non-metropolitan and rural communities. They voiced their pleasure at having someone to speak to about different issues regarding their sexual orientation.

From those who identified they had an experience they wished to discuss, 36 gave consent to have their interview recorded. From these recordings, 31 interviews were then transcribed by the researcher. Of the five rejected, one could not be understood clearly due to a strong accent and quiet speaking voice and the other four did not meet the criteria of identifying as a man who has sex with other men. They identified as heterosexual men who did not have sex with men at all but who had been sexually abused as children. This is an important and emotional topic, but not the focus of this study.

Of the 31 interviews transcribed, 29 were fully analysed and reported in the findings. The two interviews not used were rejected because the violence had been perpetrated by their partners and constitutes domestic violence within gay relationships rather than a bias incident.

Compared with survey styled studies this is not a large number of participants, but considering the richness of the information shared in these long and frank interviews, they are a valuable source of information. There are a number of possible reasons for this small number of participants. Perhaps homosexually active men are not being subjected to bias incidents in Western Australia. The advertising campaign may not have been extensive enough to reach all men.

Homosexually active men might feel they have too much to lose if they disclose their sexual orientation or practices to any one at all. It could be that there is apathy regarding reporting to anyone, as men perceive that little can be done anyway. These issues will be addressed further in later chapters.

Of the 29 participants whose interviews were analysed there was an age range from 21 to 60 years. Figure 3 shows the age profile of those interviewed and reveals a concentration of participants in the 31 to 40 age group.
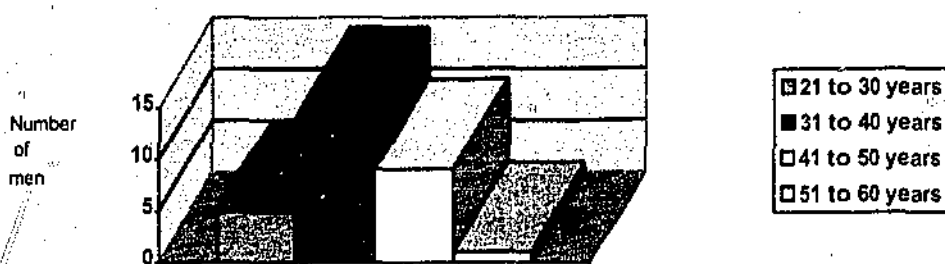
Figure 3 Age of participants

Examination of this data reveals that no participants under the age of 21 responded to the study. This may be a reflection of Western Australian laws prohibiting men to have sex with men if under the age of 21. Alternatively it may be a reflection of the individual's comfort level when discussing issues about sexual orientation. Because of the inner conflict many young men experience when going through the 'coming out' process, they may have reservations about talking openly about any negative experience.

The majority of men participating in the study were between 31 and 50 years of age and only one participant was over 51. It might be that this age group is not

as visible to others and hence is less persecuted. Alternatively, they might have developed good mechanisms to deal with any bias incidents.

One key component of this research was that all men self-identified as homosexually active. Figure 4 identifies the sexual orientation of those interviewed. Apart from one participant who described himself as heterosexual and four who identified themselves as bisexual, the remainder defined their sexual orientation as gay or homosexual.
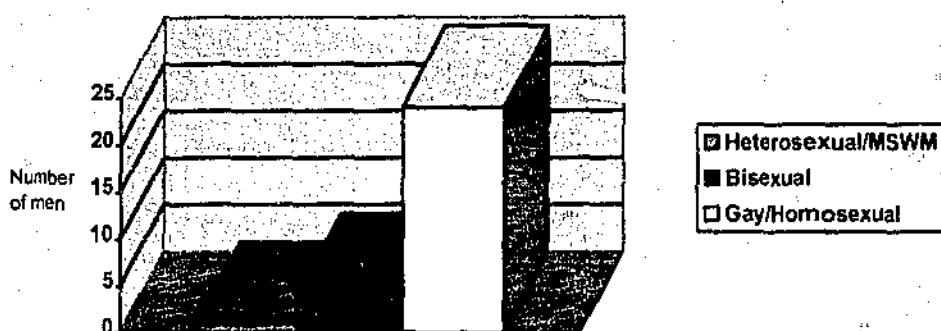
Figure 4 Sexual orientation

Not all Australian studies have identified the sexual orientation of the participants (GLAD, 1994). Those that have, have only identified that participants were gay, lesbian or bisexual (Baird, et al., 1994). The *Count &* *Counter* report(Cox, 1992) identified 3.3% of respondents as heterosexual. Their 1993 study identified 6.4% of participants as heterosexual.

By advertising in mainstream newspapers and on mainstream radio and television this study attempted to access men who did not identify as gay or attend gay venues or events. Figure 4 graphically shows that this has not been totally successful with only one person identifying as heterosexual. There may

be several reasons for this low number, raising issues to be examined in later chapters. These include the data collection period; had it been longer, as were the two *Count and Counter* studies (8 and 12 months respectively), would there have been time to reach heterosexual men? These men may have perceived that there was a large risk of disclosure or retribution if they contacted an anonymous phone number. Some men may be experiencing powerful mental or emotional responses following their experience and may not yet feel able to talk to anyone. If they admit to having sex with other men, does this mean they automatically label themselves as homosexual? Finally, some men may deny that they actually have sex with other men, and may not want to admit that at times they have such encounters.

Prior to describing and analysing the lived experience, it was first necessary to establish that the participant had been exposed to an actual bias incident. A bias incident is defined as an incident of violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution. The important component here is that the men perceived the incident as related to their sexual orientation. Men were asked to describe an act perpetrated against them, eg. violence. They were asked to define why they perceived it to be an act of bias and not an act of robbery or some other motivation. All men described verbal expletives which condemned homosexually active men; such as, *"you're a faggot"(F)* [1], *"bloody poofter"* *(H)*, *"if you want to be a bum banger then accept what you get" (O)*, and *"all poofters deserve to be beaten shitless" (AA)*. These types of narratives

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[1] The bracketed letter following any participant statement reflects the coding used in transcription and analysis.

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indicated why they perceived the physical and emotional attacks to be a result of their sexual orientation.

Figures 5 and 6 identifies the types of incidents reported. Figure 5 focuses on the context of violence, whereas, Figure 6 focuses on harassment, discrimination and persecution. It is important to note that the total of incidents is greater than the number of interviews analysed.
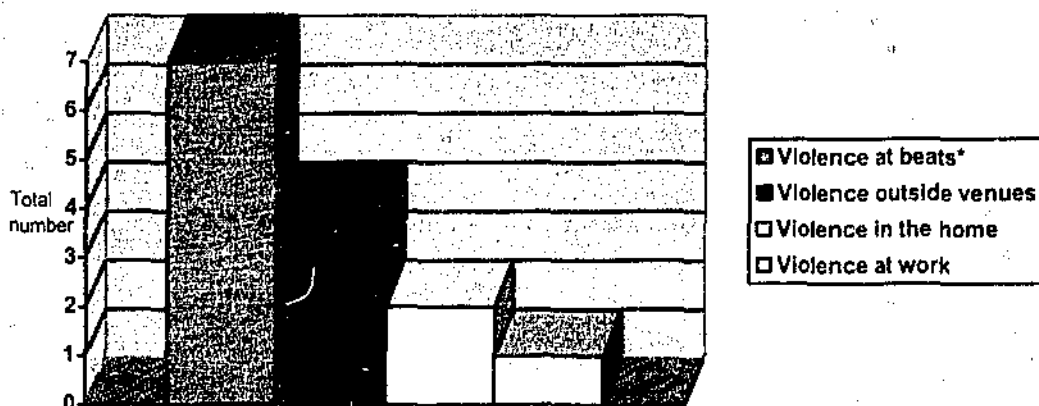
Figure 5 Location of violent acts experienced by participants
* Beats – Public places where men meet for sex with other men; public toilets and public parks

The reason for this is that many participants had a number of incidents to report during the course of the interview with some incidents being classified under more than one category.
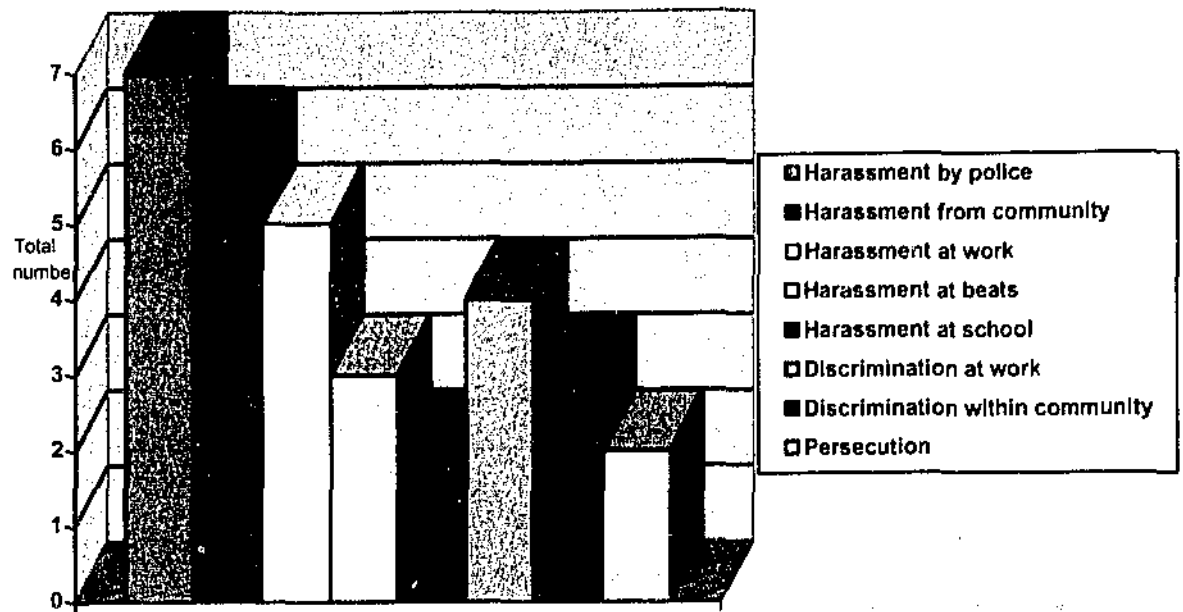
Figure 6 Types of harassment, discrimination and persecution experienced by participants

Bias Incidents

When documenting a detailed analysis of the lived experience of these homosexually active men following any perceived sexually oriented bias incident, it is crucial to explore the types of incidents that have been reported to the researcher. Many of the narratives contained multiple forms of bias such as violence, harassment, persecution and discrimination. The types of incidents reported were varied and described the personal pain each participant was forced to endure. These are explored below.

Most incidents involved an act of physical violence against the participant. For the purpose of this study, violence was defined as any unlawful exercise of physical force causing harm. This physical force may range from pushing or shoving someone to inflicting harm on the individual with a weapon of some description.

Physical violence

Andrew's story [2]

> *One time outside the beat at (suburb of Perth) I was
> hanging around the toilets and I came out and I saw this guy
> looking at me. When I was going back to my car he gave me
> a look and he got into his car. I followed him and he pulled
> up into a sort of cul-de-sac.... Then I found out that he was a
> poofter basher. He smacked me, he punched me in the face,
> he grabbed my hair and pulled my head right back and
> called me a fuckin' poofter. As he held my hair he twisted
> my hand behind me and kneed me in the back a number of
> times. All the time he was hitting me he was telling me that I
> was a poofter and all poofters deserved to be beaten shitless,
> that they should be shot, that they are evil and that God hates
> poofters and all that shit. He just kicked the shit out of me
> and then left me on the ground and just drove off. (AA)*

Barry's story

> *I was sitting with someone at a car park. The car
> park happened to be one close by where homosexuals hang
> out. Admittedly it was the early hours of the morning. We
> were just sitting there minding our own business and all of a
> sudden 5 young guys ripped the car doors open and pulled us
> out. The chap I was with managed to get away, but I didn't.
> They took to me with batons and boots and whatever else. I
> finished up in hospital with 2 broken ribs, and a kicked-in
> eye which I have had to have a couple of operations on over
> the years....I can't imagine why or what people really have
> against anybody being gay. (S)*

Charlie's story

> *I remember it was very hot. About 8 o'clock I
> decided to drive down to a place which is near the
> university.... I'd only been there I suppose about 5 minutes
> and this guy came up to me. We started chatting. He invited
> me to go with him back to his flat. I said "I'll go and get my*

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[2] To maintain anonymity, names presented are fictitious.

*car then I will follow you back to your place." I started to
walk towards my car, just as I was about to open the door I
felt this tap on my shoulder and I turned around and there
was this young guy. I remember he said something to the
effect, you're a poofter, or are you a poofter, do you want to
suck my cock. Before I had a chance to reply he had kneed
me in the groin, brought his knee up between my legs, and
then punched me in the stomach. I fell down on my knees on
the ground. Then he started knocking me about the head or
something. I remember putting my arms up, protecting
myself, to protect my head. I was clutching my keys, as he
was bashing me about the head. The next thing I knew he
actually grabbed the keys and managed to rip them down my
cheek before he threw them away. Then he gave me a final
boot in the stomach and said something like bloody pervert
or fuckin pervert or something like that and then he ran off.
(BB)*

Damian's story

*Within about 3 seconds he turned around and said
fuck off or something and he jumped me straight away. He
smacked me in the jaw, punched me with his fist hard, like
three times in the mouth and jaw and neck. It happened
quite fast 'cause he kicked me in the bum and on my back
and legs...I was a bit shocked 'cause he hit me hard, he
really used his fists, once again in the jaw...(V)*

Verbal violence

For some of the participants verbal violence was an issue which was also to

have an impact on them. The consequences of experiencing a verbal attack can

be as devastating as experiencing a physical attack for it leaves the person

feeling just as violated and traumatised.

Edward's story

*He said I was a poofter and didn't deserve to have
anything. I was the scum of the earth.....The thing is, all the
time they were taunting us with comments such as, we were
the scum of the earth. Bum fuckers like us didn't deserve to*

*have rights and had no right to own anything, stuff like that
the whole time. (CC)*

Frederick's story

*This drunken fellow came over to us and said "you're
a nancy...you're a poofter aren't you?" and then he said
"well I'm going to head butt you." He kept following me
and saying stuff like, "come on, come on, come out into the
car park and show us that you are a man..." (K)*

Grant's story

*It was just continual verbal abuse daily. It was pretty
awful....The worst thing about it was I was teased and I was
verbally abused for quite some time. (A)*

These incidents of physical and verbal violence are typical of those reported.

Some survivors were beaten severely, many requiring some degree of medical

attention, and all experienced verbal abuse about their sexual orientation. For

others, the trauma received was not of a physical nature, however, the verbal

assaults were as traumatic as the physical assaults had been on other men.

From these reports it is evident that these unprovoked and brutal attacks were

to impact physically and mentally on those being verbally and physically

assaulted. The issue of verbal violence is an increasing problem that needs to

be addressed by all the authorities. It is possible for the police to address issues

of physical violence when it is brought to their attention. However, the issue of

verbal violence will not stop until society accepts that there is a problem and

then makes moves to have it stopped.

Persecution

Persecution is defined as any incident or campaign of oppressive treatment that was aimed at exterminating, driving away or subjugate men because of their sexual orientation. The perception of such incidents led participant to perceive that they were constantly being pursued or troubled. Like discrimination, persecution is often ongoing and it is difficult for the men to remove themselves from the situations. This is very evident in the following accounts.

Hank's story

> *Because they* (neighbours) *know I am bisexual they have caused a number of problems. You see my wife teaches handicapped children at home and we have had people arrive at our door and give us a mouthful of all sort of junk about what they would do if I touched their kid....They didn't accuse me of anything, simply a threat....This has happened on a number of occasions and it's because they know about me. They just go on making comments and snide remarks. It's very upsetting for me and my wife. (J)*

Ian's story

> *It's more persecution I would say. I lived quite a considerable time in a small rural town, everyone knows everyone else's business. And when you are a new person in town, everyone likes to get to know you, and of course the rumours start to fly. Once some people in the town put two and two together about myself and my partner, the rumours started to fly.... They went to the ex:ent of mailing pornographic material and details of what would happen to the children. Like the three headed monsters I guess....The mail wasn't sent to us, it was sent to our bosses, the local publican and the local shire office. They were also saying we were showing graphic pornographic details and we were dealing drugs to school children. You can imagine how heavy that was for a small town.... Of course it went round town like wild fire, everyone heard about it, the whole thing. It really added to the isolation of the time....We were the item of gossip.... I felt really isolated. (U)*

John's story

> *I went to a beat and a young man followed me. When he expressed a degree of ambivilance such that I thought he may be interested in some sort of sexual contact I approached him but he threatened to abuse me physically....I quickly left the scene but he must have followed me 'cause later that evening he came to the place where I was working and threatened me in the presence of somebody else. He said that if he ever saw me again he would thrash me. Because my medical practice is in the area and I also live in the area I saw him on several occasions and was subject to ongoing persecution....It was extremely intimidating and frightening and certainly caused me to alter my lifestyle. (G)*

Discrimination

Another form of bias incident perpetrated against homosexually active men was that of discrimination. Discrimination was recorded when any participant reported an incident where he perceived he had been selected for unfavourable treatment on the basis of difference. Reported examples of this include.

Kenneth's story

> *There was one incident involving the police. I was in a state of mind. I went to a park which is well known as being a beat, or I knew it was. I parked and sat there for a while. Then I got out of the car to take a leak and within 30 seconds of getting out of the car I was approached by the police. A conversation ensued.... I felt that they had approached me 'cause they figured I was gay. There was a policeman and a policewomen. My feeling was that I would be easily intimidated. I guess I was intimidated. He (police officer) asked me my name and I gave it to him, and he asked me my address and not really knowing the law I didn't really want to give him my address. Then he put me into the back of the police wagon, without telling me why I was under arrest, and I was taken to Victoria Park police station without being told why or without being told I was going*

*there. All very secretive and happened very quickly. It
didn't seem to me that they were very interested in carrying
out the law. I felt they were being very intimidating.... At the
police station they asked me what I was doing there. I told
them I was trying to find a place to take a leak. They asked
me where I had been and I said I had been to Connections
(gay nightclub). They then bought up the issue. I forget
how it was worded but they asked me if I had been there to
meet men. I said no that hadn't been my intention. Then the
policeman said 'Connections, isn't that the place for that sort
of thing'.... It did go to court. I was charged initially with
not giving my address - which would have been valid in a
way, but when the charge came out it was actually for
loitering and the issue of not giving my address wasn't
mentioned. In the court case when we were being examined
and cross examined the police committed perjury. They
really didn't have enough reason to apprehend me and take
me back to the police station so they kind of concocted this
story, nothing radical, but just a little story about them
seeing me moving from parked car to parked car. I don't
know, they were perhaps trying to suggest I was soliciting or
perhaps I was stealing the cars. It was vague. The truth is,
and this is in the initial report that I gave to the police before
the court case happened, the truth is that there was no other
car within 100 metres of me at any stage, other than the
police car. In the end the magistrate's decision was that the
charge was dismissed. (R)*

Luke's story

*I had driven down to Bibra Lake to feed the swans....I
was getting back into the car to go when a car came to come
into the parking area. Although I could have driven out, I
thought I would let them drive in before I drove out. As they
turned in I noticed it was a cop car so I opened the door to
say gidday to them as they drove in and they purposefully
drove in to such a position that they actually blocked me so I
couldn't drive off.....They then got out of the car brandishing
their waddies, I was immediately afraid that they wanted to
bash me up. They came very threatening to me saying "What
are you doing here?" and a few more accusing type
comments, just general things....then they said "Do you
realise homosexuals come here?" and I said "so what"...so
they shouted at me "are you homosexual?", and I said it had
nothing to do with them and they shouted at me and came
threatening to me, threatening and overbearing, shouting at
me....then they searched the car...and finally he said that if*

we catch you here again we will charge you....it really
cemented what I already thought about most cops. (GG)

Michael's story

> *I have been discriminated against work wise because*
> *I am gay. I have been overlooked for promotions and stuff*
> *like that. I have even reported it to the Gay and Lesbian*
> *Counselling Service, because I know why. The general*
> *manager is the biggest homophobe in the entire world....*
> *Anyway he has always overlooked me....It is alway so subtle*
> *though. You could never act upon it or say anything. It's*
> *always done in a way that he is protected....And if I do go*
> *through with reporting it, it would just be a big weight down*
> *on the job...You see they provide my accommodation and he*
> *could just say that they have had a big restructure of your*
> *accommodation and now we have decided you will have to*
> *move out, and then I loose my accommodation and out in the*
> *country it's rather expensive....So if I report the*
> *discrimination it will just lead to more. (E)*

Unlike physical violence against these homosexually active men, these types of

discrimination are not single occurrences that then allow the survivor to try to

get their life back together. These events are ongoing. Either ongoing in the

environment in which they are occurring, in the cases of Luke and Michael's

stories, or forced to be ongoing by the system which is addressing the issue, for

example the courts, as in Kenneth's story. In all cases, the mental impact on

the survivor is immense, as the men are constantly reminded of the events and

are therefore not able to resolve it and move on.

Harassment

Harassment was guided by the definition of any incident where the participant

was vexed by repeated attacks of a malicious or trivial nature. It is an action or

situation that unjustly harms or disadvantages someone, whether intentionally

or not, because of a personal characteristic, such as sexual orientation.

Harassment involves an ongoing difference in treatment, burdens or taunts,

usually motivated by bigotry, prejudice or stereotypes. These accounts are

typical of those experienced by many of the men who reported to this study.

They describe how these types of incidents can impact strongly on the feelings

and belief of the individual.

Neil's story

> *It was at work. It was only a rumour that went around but I suffered the silent treatment. Like when you walked into a room everybody would stop quiet and no one would talk to you....The rumours were that I was gay because I didn't have any girlfriends. I wasn't out at work at all, and so they started the rumours....It put a lot of pressure on and things, 'cause I am in the navy, and this was on a ship so I couldn't get away from it at all. I hated it. It's like being isolated on an island. No one is talking to you or anything in case they get labelled the same sort of thing....I want to leave. I feel really annoyed about it actually. It wasn't my fault. There are a couple of ways to protest, but if you do claim discrimination, it goes into investigation, then you have to give names and meanwhile you have to stay aboard the ship while it goes on. You just can't give names and stay on board ship while the investigation is going on. They are sure to fuck things up and the people who you are trying to charge with harassment would be quite intimidating. (X)*

Owen's story

> *I was excommunicated from my church as a result of one gay contact that I declared. I was excommunicated for that. It was supposed to be secret. It got out and not only did people withdraw themselves physically from me within the church, but one of the members who found out was a work associate and from that point on he was responsible for telling everyone, and people took great joy in seeing me come down. What he and another guy did was, they got access to the exhibit room, I worked in the law courts, and would steal pornographic gay exhibits and place them in my drawer, and on one occasion they even planted marijuana in my desk and notified the police that I had marijuana on the*

premises. That was directly associated with the fact that I was gay because they used to hound another staff member who was gay. I had been in constant fear of being found out. I got the same treatment as he got, so they forced me to resign. I felt lower than life.... It shattered my belief as a person. It totally destroyed what I had left of my identity, it took the rest of it. It totally took me apart. (DD)

Peter's story

I work with this guy....One day I got this phone call and he said he wanted a hand to move some boxes out to the store room....so I helped him, and while I was putting the boxes down, he walked around me and closed the door and locked it...the next thing I know these arms are around my neck and he is trying to kiss me...I was stunned and got out. After that he tried on a number of occasions to get me to go to the store room...Anyway, because I had to go into his office three or four times a day these type of things would happen. He would try to shove his tongue down my throat or grab at my crotch.... This continued for some eight months....The thing is, I didn't want to make a scene at work 'cause most people don't know I am gay. (FF)

Conclusion

These reports of bias incidences perpetrated against homosexually active men describe a variety of events that have occurred. Also evident is that the different incidences are not just happening in isolated places but are in the work place, at social gatherings, and in public places.

In listening to the stories of these men it became apparent that their responses fall into three categories. In some ways these are typical of responses to any attack, but in others they are specific to this group. The categories used are; immediate mental reactions, longer term mental reactions, and resulting behaviours.

These categories are represented in diagrammatic form below and discussed at length in the following chapters.
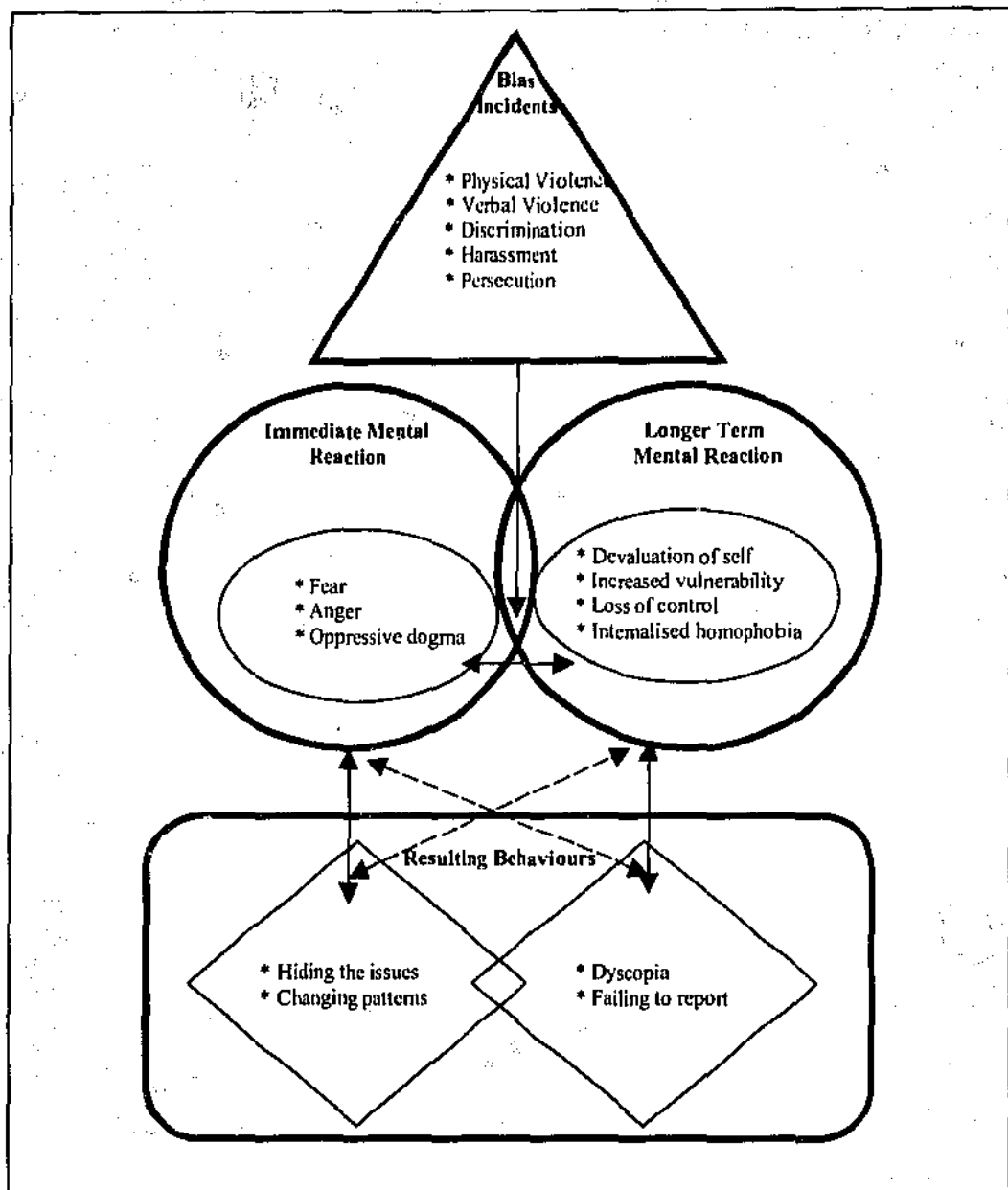
Figure 7 Surviving sexually oriented bias incidents: Analysis model.

Chapter Six

Description of the Immediate Mental Reactions

Introduction

Many of the bias incidents had an impact on the participants physically, however, all had powerful and longer lasting non-physical impacts. An important issue for the reader to remember when reflecting on these descriptions is that the men's accounts are reflections of the incidents. The significance of this is that these men are reporting what they remember of the incident and what they remember experiencing. As they have not been interviewed immediately after the incident, for some it was up to eight years after, they may not necessarily be all the reactions experienced as some may have been lost over time. The mental reactions recalled are those which had the strongest impact.

Another important factor that has been identified in the analysis is that the three categories contained sub-components. These component responses are important to the mental reaction experienced and have been identified as impacting strongly on men at differing times. Components identified as being linked to immediate and longer term reactions and with the resulting behaviour include;

- Shame
- Emotional hurt

- Embarrassment

- Denial

- Resentment

- Frustration

This chapter will report the immediate mental reactions that affected every

participant in this study. Every man described fear, anger, and oppressive dogmas

that overpowered them following their exposure to an incident.
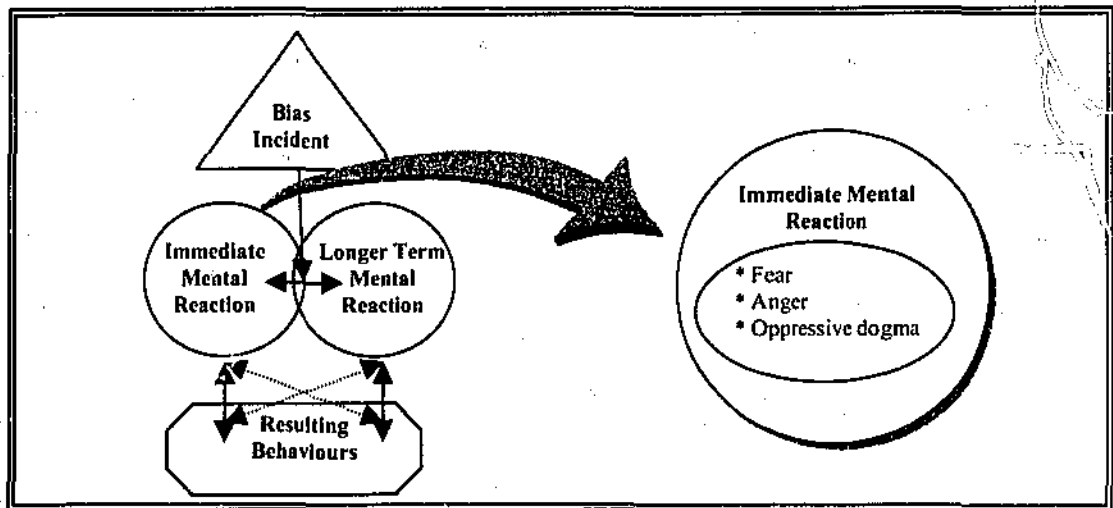
Figure 8 Immediate mental reaction

Fear

One of the most powerful reactions reported was fear; defined as a painful

response caused by any impending danger or evil (Sykes, 1982) stimulated either

by an actual experience, or by the thought of such an experience. All 29

participants in this study spoke of the fears they experienced following the incident

to which they had been exposed. The notable finding of this study is that fear for

these men had many different foci. The first of these was a generic fear resulting from the incident. Other aspects of fear were fear for physical safety, fear for the loss of social support networks, fear of disclosure and fear of reporting.

For the men who discussed a generic fear from the exposure to the incident, it was identified that the fear was not focused towards any one or any thing, but was the men's immediate reaction to what had happened. This natural reaction can be identified from a chemical biophysical viewpoint known as fright and flight; the body experiences a physical reaction from the production of adrenaline and nor-adrenaline in response to an external stimulus. In this study generic fear was determined from men's own reports.

> *I was absolutely traumatised by this situation. I mean*
> *every time it started to get dark I would feel a rising fear coming*
> *up... (H)*

This fear can have long-term disruptive consequences. Glietman (1980) indicates that disruption of the digestive system, constipation, loss of bladder and bowel control, sexual dysfunction, impotence and frigidity can result from long term experience of fear. One man who described his feelings expressed this.

> *In the end I wasn't even sure if I was gay....I couldn't*
> *even get an erection.... All and all for about one and a half*
> *years I was nothing. I came out as nothing. I was asexual...(I)*

For other men, however, the recollection of the experience rekindled an emotional response of fear rather than a physiological response. This

reaction was not categorised by descriptions of physical feelings, but rather by descriptive terms of how they were reacting to the event.

I was desperate. I was frightened...(FF)
I was too scared...well what can you do...(A)

Any person who has been exposed to any actual or threatened assault often lives in fear of a repeat of such an action. This reaction is very strong when in an environment that may replicate the one where the previous exposure occurred. For the men in this study, there was an expression of fear for physical safety when leaving what they perceived to be a safe environment.

...I'm always looking over my shoulder, you know,
watching all the time in case someone is going to come up and
lay into me... (AA)
You can't go anywhere without thinking it is going to
happen, it is always just around the corner. (K)

Not all men expressed a fear for their physical safety, however, many discussed a fear of losing emotional and physical support. The focus of this reaction centred on the loss of personal and social support of those people who were close to them. For the men who are not open about their sexual orientation, fear of disclosure, and possible alientation, dominated.

Most of all I fear losing those I care about and the hurt it would
bring to the people around me.... (C)
I can't tell anyone. The consequences of that would be disastrous.
(AA)

The fear of losing personal and social support was further compounded for men who feared that any decreased support would have a more global affect on their

lives. Not only did they express that their personal lives were being affected, but they also feared that their business world would be affected.

> *Also, if it got out it would affect my business and social contacts....*
> (C)
> *You just can't give names and stay on board ship while the investigation is on. (X)*

This issue of fear of others finding out about the incident and removing personal and social support, was one that had a major impact on the participants. More importantly, the fear of decreased support was not only related to the men's personal lives but also to their private and professional lives.

The immediate reaction of fear also related to the issue of reporting the incident to the authorities, primarily the police. For some men, there was a fear that the incident would be disclosed to others, both inside and outside the police force.

> *I don't want it to get out to other people. That is a fear....I don't think reporting it would help me feel more comfortable with the situation, in fact I think I would feel more worried... (AA*
> *...I can't report because I am married.....I have no confidence that confidentiality will be given by the police....What if my wife found out? (C)*
> *I don't want to report it . Some of my family are in the police force and some of my family are high profile in the media, and well, there are a lot of reasons, you can understand. (V)*

The fear being experienced was multifacited, as some participants not only perceived that they would risk alienation from family and friends (as discussed previously), but also loss of jobs, social standing, and self integrity. Because of

this, the issue of reporting any incident to the police was perceived as not being an option at all.

In addition to men expressing a fear that the police would disclose their sexual orientation to other people, they also feared that this issue would be made public. Some men perceived that the police would not maintain their confidence and would freely publicise what had happened to them.

> *Most of us hold positions of importance here* (country town). *That sort of publicity, well we didn't want that... (E)*

The fear of publicity experienced by the men was confused with other reactions such as embarrassment and shame. The culmination of these reactions escalated the fear to a level where they were not able report the incident to any judicial or social authority.

> *I was pretty much afraid to report it....I felt so embarrassed and so ashamed by the whole thing. I was afraid that if I was to breathe it to anyone, the attention and the publicity, I didn't want that... (GG)*

This phenomena of fear, be it physical or emotional, remained a real reaction for all men. Whereas many people identify that they live in fear following any exposure to a negative stimuli, this study has identified that fear is multifaceted. Some described it as a constant and ongoing reaction, whereas others described it as a reaction that resurfaced following some sort of physical or verbal stimuli which reactivated the reaction. The impact of one or all of the different foci of fear remained a constant for most of the men. For other men it resurfaced when they

were exposed to negative stimuli. Its overall impact, however, prevented men from acting on the experience and working to overcome the reaction.

Anger

Fear was frequently reported as being accompanied by anger. Important findings from this research describe different factors surrounding the reaction of anger experienced by these homosexually active men. Not only were they reporting an immediate anger that had happened to them, but it has also been identified that they expressed anger directed towards themselves as well as anger at society.

The first reaction, an immediate response of anger, occurred directly following the incident. Like the initial reaction of fear, this anger was not focused against any thing or any one but solely at the fact that they had to endure the treatment at all.

> *...it makes me feel very angry, because I have to put up with these sorts of things... (L)*
> *I was angry that they thought they had the right to bash us up because we are gay. (Q)*
> *...I was angry because, as an individual why should I not do what I was doing?. (G)*

A number of men expressed the sentiment of wanting to act on the anger they were feeling. The expression of wanting to turn the tide of violence or persecution on those perpetrating such incidences was very evident.

> *...You get so angry. You feel like killing some of these people that are saying these things... (H)*

> *I feel very angry, very angry about it. You wish you*
> *could lash out. It will be a sorry day when a gay person actually*
> *lashes out at a straight person for actually assaulting them... (E)*

The men's conflicts of emotion appear to have prevented them from taking any action. Whether it was the fear of publicity, the fear of exposure, the fear of physical harm, or the fear of criminal legislation preventing violent retribution, they did not act on their anger.

The second focus of anger was the self. Participants condemned themselves for allowing the incident to happen; for placing themselves in a position where they were exposed to any incident. For many men the event itself was not the focal issue. Instead they focused on self-condemnation for allowing themselves to get into the position in the first place.

> *I am angry with myself cause I should have remembered*
> *from my first experience. (M)*

The anger directed at themselves for letting the incident happen was associated with an anger that their actions had directly caused the incident to happen. Perpetually on their mind was the questioning/disclaiming that if they had not taken a certain action then they would never have been exposed to the incident.

> *I was pretty angry with myself....You know certain toilets*
> *are known to be beats and these people target these places. Well*
> *if I wasn't in that situation to be harassed in the first place then I*
> *wouldn't have got myself in that situation. (F)*
> *I felt that I had done something wrong. I felt ashamed of*
> *myself for what I had allowed to happen and I felt angry that I*
> *let it happened to me. (HH)*

A third focus of the participants' anger was at society rather then the event itself. Believing that the action they had taken was not deserving of such treatment, they placed the onus of responsibility on society. Again this component of anger was multileveled. Firstly there was an anger that society provided no avenue to address the issue that they were being confronted with.

> *Angry. I'm angry with society. Angry because there is*
> *nowhere to go and there is no one to talk to ...because I'm gay I*
> *don't think you have the same rights. It's more like, well you are*
> *gay, you deserved it... (Y)*

It seemed to many that society appeared to condone the continuation of such violence, harassment, discrimination and persecution. They believe that the social structure, as they see it, provides no provision for them to seek support, guidance or justice.

> *It just pisses me off that people actually do that... (Q)*
> *...I'm angry with the ethos. The system that forces people*
> *to have to act differently in different social settings... (O)*
> *Anger at not being able to say, look, this has happened to me... (G)*

This immediate reaction of anger corresponds with the reaction of fear, previously identified, in that it too is multifaceted. These three perspectives of anger; general anger at the event, anger at self and anger at society, pervaded all their stories. Not all men expressed each perspective of anger; however, all expressed at least one. The impact of this anger is such that men have struggled to address the issues that are surfacing. They are condemning themselves for allowing the incident to happen and then blaming society for failing to help them address their needs. The

result is that they are unable to resolve many of the inner conflicts that are being experienced.

Oppressive dogma

The notion of oppressive dogma relates to the despotic and overwhelming doctrine the men adopted following their experience of a bias incident. The issues identified within this theme include; hopelessness, powerlessness, disempowerment, anxiety, confusion and frustration.

The first notion, which was a commonly reported issue for most participants, was hopelessness or powerlessness. Many men felt disempowered. They didn't know how to handle the situation. They felt trapped in their own silence and believed that there was no avenue that could be followed in trying to resolve their anguish. Some perceived that the violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution could not have been prevented. They felt that these events would continue to happen because of their sexual orientation and that they were disempowered to do anything to try to resolve their personal dilemmas.

> ...*I just felt hopeless and let it slip. I had to accept the situation. (Y)*
> *The thing is to just accept the fact that you have been beaten up and get on with it... (O)*
> *I really couldn't do anything about it. (Q)*
> ...*Well what can you do. At the time I didn't know what to do... (A)*

The sense of powerlessness was not only directed at them personally. The anger that many men were expressing about a society that had abandoned them was also mixed with a sense of hopelessness directed towards organisations within that social structure. Already feeling that there was no direction open to them personally, some men perceived that organisations established to help would either not want to help or would not be able to help.

> *I felt a sense of hopelessness I guess. From the first approach from the police I had the sense that I was senseless.....But I did feel hopeless about the situation. What was happening, I had no control over... (R)*
>
> *I really couldn't do anything about it. I want to keep my personal life away from the police and all that...(Q)*
>
> *I got such a run around because I said I was claiming on the grounds of sexual orientation. I got pushed to and fro. I could never get a straight answer. (E)*

The culmination of oppressive reactions created inner conflict for men. They did not discuss only experiencing hopelessness, or only feeling frustrated. For some men, experiencing the sense of hopelessness was coupled with a frustration that led to confusion and a repeated questioning as to why these incidents were happening.

> *...I can't imagine why or what people really have against anybody being gay. I mean, you mind your own business. You don't touch them in any way. You don't affect them in any way. Why the heck have they got to beat the hell out of you?... (S)*
>
> *I thought your parents were supposed to be supportive....They say they love you, then they beat the shit out of you...I remember asking my father 'when will you give me the love of a father' and he said to me, 'when you start acting like a son'...I mean shit why! What am I supposed to do, lie? (A)*

Two participants spoke of the inner confusion about themselves as sexual beings that resulted from their crisis situation.

> *I was very confused. Well in nine months I think I probably wanked myself off three times, and I had no physical contact with anyone, and for me at that stage that was really weird.... (I)*
>
> *I had girlfriends and boyfriends at the same time...I was at some stage going through a period of trying to be straight. But I knew that I couldn't. Maybe I could be bi (bisexual) or whatever. I want to be noticed as an individual but I don't necessarily want to stand out to the point where people can ridicule me.... (K)*

Linked to the notion of powerlessness were the notions of anxiety and frustration. Men expressed a despair of not being able to live the life they believed was their right. The culmination of these immediate reactions combined in such a way that the homosexually active men in this study felt physically and emotionally trapped.

> *...there was a period of time when I just felt that I couldn't do anything... (A)*
>
> *...I feel that I should be able to be free to be that (bisexual) way... (C)*

The frustration was also targeted towards community and health workers. Perceiving that they were trapped, that their actions had led to the incident occurring, that society was uncaring to their needs and being fearful of further exposure, many men sought the advice of professional health providers. For these men this action did not resolve their conflict; instead, it added to their conflict when they perceived workers to be uncaring or not understanding.

> *She (work psychologist) was prepared to listen. However, in trying to understand I think she placed it into a simple framework and tried to reduce it down to a sexually*

frustrated situation rather than a mental one. ...she really wasn't able to, I feel anyway, understand and she couldn't suggest anything to deal with it either. (L)

They (counsellors) preferred not to deal with it. They were in denial. The word homosexual never came up... (DD)

I tried talking to a social worker and the social worker just said to go and see a psychiatrist and he just gave me all these weird and wonderful tablets.... (I)

Conclusion

Fear, anger, and oppressive dogmas were the primary immediate mental reactions reported by participants. Some used other words and talked of other reactions. Most (26 of the 29) reported more than one reaction. However, the reader is left with a sense of a group of men experiencing powerful and lasting reactions, which are bound to impact on their physical and mental wellbeing. The identification of the multiple aspects of each of these themes helps the researcher to untangle the conflict that is being lived by these men. Not all men experienced every reaction, nor are these reactions independent of one another. What has been described here is that the culmination of these immediate reactions creates a conflict that they are not able to address effectively. Because these men have to live with these thoughts and feelings on a day to day basis, constantly feeling the anger, the fears, and these oppressive dogmas, they are being denied a peaceful and trouble free lifestyle. This mental anguish becomes an ongoing part of their lives and one that dominated very much when they made an attempt to put the incident behind them and move on.

Description of the Longer Term Mental Reactions

Introduction

In addition to the immediate mental reactions reported in Chapter Six, all

participants talked of longer term mental reactions stemming from their exposure

to the incident. These included, devaluation of self, an increased sense of

vulnerability, a loss of control, and internalised heterosexism. The purpose of this

chapter is to examine the longer term mental reactions.
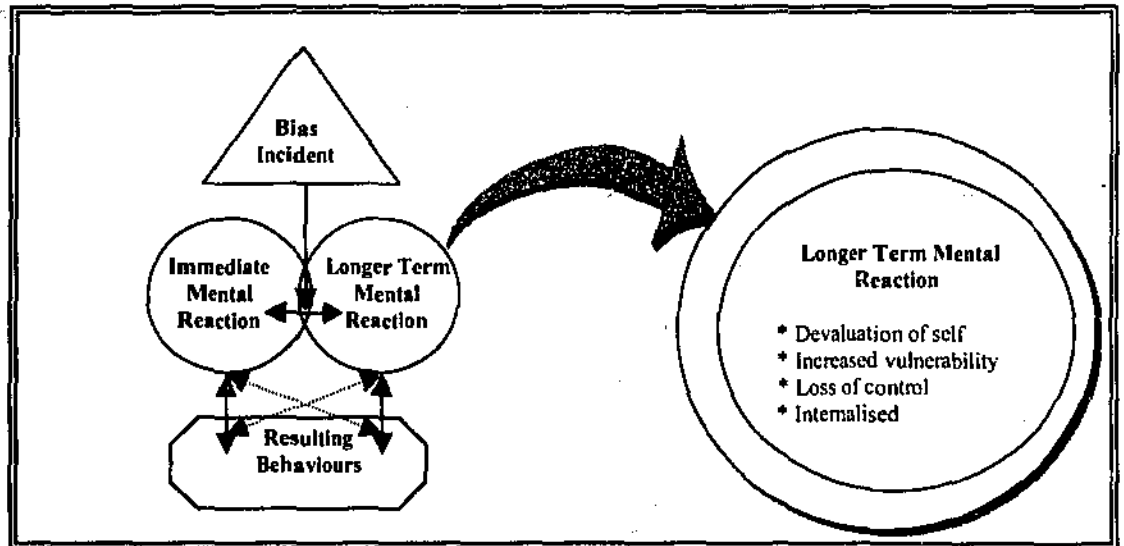
Figure 9 Longer term mental reactions

Devaluation of self

Chapter Six described oppressive dogmas that included reactions of hopelessness,

powerlessness and confusion, and evoked feelings of disempowerment for many

men. This study has identified that the experience of living with these dogmas had further impact on the mental reactions of homosexually active men following their exposure to a bias incident.

One of the longer term mental reactions impinging on these men's daily lives was evoked when they perceived themselves as being a lesser person.

> *It shattered my belief as a person. Everything I thought I*
> *was good at was tainted with the word homosexual. Nothing I*
> *did was clean of the word....It totally destroyed what I had left of*
> *my identity. It took the rest of it. It totally took me apart. (DD)*
> *I got to the point that I just couldn't get it together.... (H)*

Not only did this reaction cause men to regard themselves as being insignificant or unworthy of being a human being, but they also expressed that being a lesser person meant that they were unable to cope fully within society. When a central part of their lives, their sexual orientation had been defaced by a negative event, they began to consider themselves as inferior. Very often these mental reactions negated any positive feelings they held for themselves, causing them to believe that they actually deserved the treatment they had received.

> *I mean - How can you feel good about yourself when*
> *something (being gay) that is a big part of you, which, in*
> *essence, is you, and you get the shit kicked out of you because of*
> *it. (AA)*
> *I'd like to say that I think my life has been ruined by the*
> *sort of attitudes of other people who are different. I can't do*
> *much about it but really, I have been subtly and not so subtly*
> *knocked down all my life. I can never be. I can't ever be*
> *spontaneous and free in an open society as I have the potential*
> *to be because of the damage. (H)*
> *I was so alienated that I just became a loner. (I)*

> *I was bad. I didn't have a gay identity. Because I didn't
> understand homosexuality, I would say that I felt lower than life.
> (DD)*
>
> *I went so far back into the closet I couldn't even see
> daylight....I actually became a recluse... (E)*

The impact of these longer term mental reaction has been identified as having

immense repercussions for the men who are affected. Perceiving that they are not

worthy citizens has led to self imposed isolation, to reclusion and to believing that

they cannot live spontanious lives. Unaddressed, these reactions have created

barriers behind which many men became trapped and oppressed.

Increased sense of vulnerability

Identifying that they could not control events and were to be constantly exposed to

what society was going to put onto them, men described how they believed that

they were vulnerable, that anything could happen to them at any time.

> *It reached the point where I found it extremely difficult to
> even go out to the letterbox at home or even walk down the
> street. It got really bad....I felt that I was going to be shot at, all
> the time. It was just as bad as having a whole lot of snipers
> along the street with guns. The sort of feeling that when you
> went out you felt utterly vulnerable.... (H)*
>
> *It was probably six to eight months before I plucked up
> the courage to go back out on the scene. I felt that somehow
> everyone knew about it, which was ridiculous because no-one
> had seen it, but I felt that the guy who had bashed me may have
> been gay and that I might see him up at the club or whatever and
> if that was the case that he had sort of told his friends about it or
> something....it was all quite irrational, but to that extent it
> affected my lifestyle. (BB)*
>
> *I'm really nervous about going out on my own. I'm
> always sort of looking over my shoulder, watching all the time in
> case someone is going to come up and lay into me... (AA)*

The experience of living with a heightened sense of vulnerability affected men's functioning both at work and socially. Constantly living with the fear that they would be exposed to a repeat of the incident, therefore being vulnerable to ongoing attacks, meant that some men could not continue at work. For other men, their whole social structure was thrown into array as they could no longer go out as individuals, but required to be escorted. This resulted in men becoming frustrated because they perceived that it was impossible for them to meet other men on a romantic or sexual level as they were constantly in the company of others.

Experiencing this vulnerability, combined with a perceived loss of control regarding what was happening around them, three respondents spoke of a severe crisis in their life. Confronted with what they perceived as unbeatable odds they believed there was no reason to continue with life. Faced with possible disclosure of sexual orientation or 'unsavoury practices' to family, friends, work colleagues, or peers, at this point of their life suicide appeared the only avenue left open to them.

> *Because I couldn't get away from it* (harrassment and threatened violence) *if I walked out in front of it* (oncoming car) *and they hit me it would be all over... (I)*
> *Suicide became the way out when things got too bad...*
> *(C)*
> *Depressed isn't quite the word.... Eventually I got to the stage where I became suicidal. I drove down to the beach and was going to go for a swim, and I started out...(FF)*

This vulnerability impacted on many of the men in this study as it prevented them from achieving much that they hoped for in life. Mixed with the immediate mental reactions, and a sense of loss of control, participants identified that the incident they had experienced had resulted in a significant mental reaction.

Loss of control

Experiencing any bias incident, and the immediate mental reactions that accompanied it, had a lasting impact on the men who participated in this study. Already living with fear, anger and oppressive dogmas, another longer term reaction to invade their emotional status was a sense of loss of control. An important issue identified here is that this reaction had different dimensions associated with it. First there was a sense that there was a social and judicial loss of control. Secondly, some men identified that they had no control over who would learn of the experience, and finally there was a perceived loss of control of the recurrence of further exposure to bias incidents.

An aspect of loss of control manifested itself when men described feeling alone and let down by a society that supported laws that allowed some bias incidents to continue unpunished.

> *I always felt scared to say that, because of reactions...No-one listens anyway, let alone does anything...(A)*
> *Who the hell can you tell. No one is interested or cares what has happened to a poofter. (M)*

> *I had to make up a story. There was no way I could say
> what had really happened. You know what they do to us, and
> they can, or so the law says anyway. (AA)*

Adding further to their sense of loss of control was their expressed fear of

disclosure and publicity. Believing that once they disclosed their experience to

others, this delicate and often embarrassing information would be made available

to others. The result of these perceptions were that men believed it was not

possible to report the incident that they had been exposed to, therefore, they could

do nothing but put up with what was happening. They were powerless to control

the events that were happening to them.

> *If you report you risk so much, like job and status in
> society and personal relationships. (O)*
> *I went to two gay lawyers who had their own agenda
> about doing things, streams apart from each other, at the
> opposite ends of the spectrum, and there was no essence of me
> being in control of the proceedings at all... (R)*

The ongoing and longer term effect of these feelings regarding devaluation of self,

and the viewpoint that they had gotten what they deserved, resulted in some men

voicing feelings of resignation. They considered they had reached a crisis level in

their lives where they believed there was nothing they could do to prevent this, or

further incidents, because they were gay or bisexual men.

> *I felt I must have done something wrong....I felt ashamed
> of myself for what I allowed to have happened....I suppose to a
> certain extent I invited it. It was going to happen one day.....
> (HH)*
> *I'm gay so the odds are pretty high that there will be a
> next time. (AA)*

It's hopeless as you can never change me or society....I
do the beats and that is seen as deviant, therefore I deserve to be
punished..... (C)
You get used to all these sort of things. We've all been
around and we've all experienced these sort of things before,
so.... (E)

Continually devaluing themselves, believing that they were a lesser person in the eyes of society and 'will get their just deserts' for living outside the moral and social morès, resulted in men sensing that they had lost control. This belief system affected how many of the men functioned within their social bounds. These beliefs also acted as a catalyst for many of the participants to internalise heterosexist attitudes.

Internalised heterosexism

Internalised heterosexism refers to the negative internal belief system a gay man or lesbian develops towards homosexuality. It often evolves for a person following an experience where they have been condemned for their sexual orientation, or following reports of incidents that have occurred to other homosexual people. The result of this internalisation of negativity regarding homosexuality has a big impact on the individual, how they view themselves, and the way they interact within society. The internalisation of beliefs can also be founded in cultural heterosexism by the failure of the major institutions (religious, legal, media and psychiatry/psychology) to take a positive stand on homosexuality. It is their failure to 'speak out' and support the gay and lesbian lifestyle as a healthy

alternative that has allowed society to condemn or defame it. This societal/political inaction not only leads to individuals forming negative views of their own sexuality, but also creates a homosexual community that continues to remain concealed.

For the men interviewed for this study, the culmination of surviving the bias incident, the inner turmoil being experienced, their fear of disclosure of their sexual orientation, and the longer term mental responses, were further heightened by internalised heterosexism.

> *I am gay, I don't think you have the same rights....it's like, you are gay, well you deserved it. (Y)*
> *I suppose to a certain extent I invited it. It was going to happen one day...I suppose I invited it to happen. (HH)*
> *You get what you deserve don't you...anyway there is more sympathy given to the perpetrators. (C)*
> *There wasn't any point in telling anyone.... What do you think, after all, you are homosexual. (GG)*

This study also identified that the internalised heterosexism is not only a result of the experience these homosexually active men were reporting; for many men, this reaction had already been cemented by anecdotal evidence already reported by friends and in the media.

> *I don't know how police handle gay people....I have heard of gay people being bashed in prisons and that... (Q)*
> *The police were well known for harassing gays, particularly at beats....Bearing in mind that the police were, you know, not gay's favourite people and they did patrol the beats and they did hassle people and the rest of it... (BB)*
> *...because of the previous way police have treated gays. You know when you get pulled up by police officers,*

> *they ask you if you are gay, in not very friendly terms and you*
> *are expected to answer on your sexuality because you have*
> *not done anything... (Y)*

Their personal experience, however, has reinforced their anecdotal evidence, and what had previously been identified as hear-say has been confirmed as fact. The impact of this internalised heterosexism is that issues continue to influence the actions they adopted. Because of this, many of the participants had failed to address the issue on a personal, social or judicial level, and therefore, they continued to be affected by the longer term mental reactions.

The impact of the longer term reaction is immense. Some men made conscious decisions not to go to university, others avoided socialising with friends, and some believed they could no longer remain in the community they lived in. This resulted in men not realising their social or professional potentials.

> *I just pulled out of school...all my dreams of going to*
> *university had been squashed. (E)*
> *It was why I moved...(CC)*
> *I don't go out on my own any more...(AA)*

Conclusion

The descriptions of the longer term mental reactions to surviving a bias incident have been graphically displayed in the above accounts. The men who related their stories have illustrated how these events have impacted on them, how they perceive themselves as vulnerable to further attacks and that they feel themselves

lesser persons for allowing the event to happen to them. Furthermore, some men told of a desire to terminate their life rather than be forced to go on with the memories of the incident. For others there was a sense that they had lost control of their lives and were not able to pursue the dreams and ambitions they had hoped for. Finally, for some men, the mental impact led them to internalise what some in society were saying about homosexuals, that is, that they are deserving of any violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution because of the lifestyle they are leading. All these events have had a great impact on these men and caused them to adopt behaviours in their day to day lives as a means of coping. These resulting behaviours will be addressed further in chapter eight.

Chapter Eight

Description of the Resulting Behaviours

Introduction

For many participants, surviving a bias incident and living with the immediate and

longer term mental responses resulted in their making major changes to their

behaviour. This often meant a significant lifestyle change, which in some cases

was actually counterproductive, nevertheless, they perceived the short term benefit

of escaping the consequences of their experiences far outweighed the longer term

cost. This chapter identifies the resulting behaviours these men adopted and the

impact they had on them.
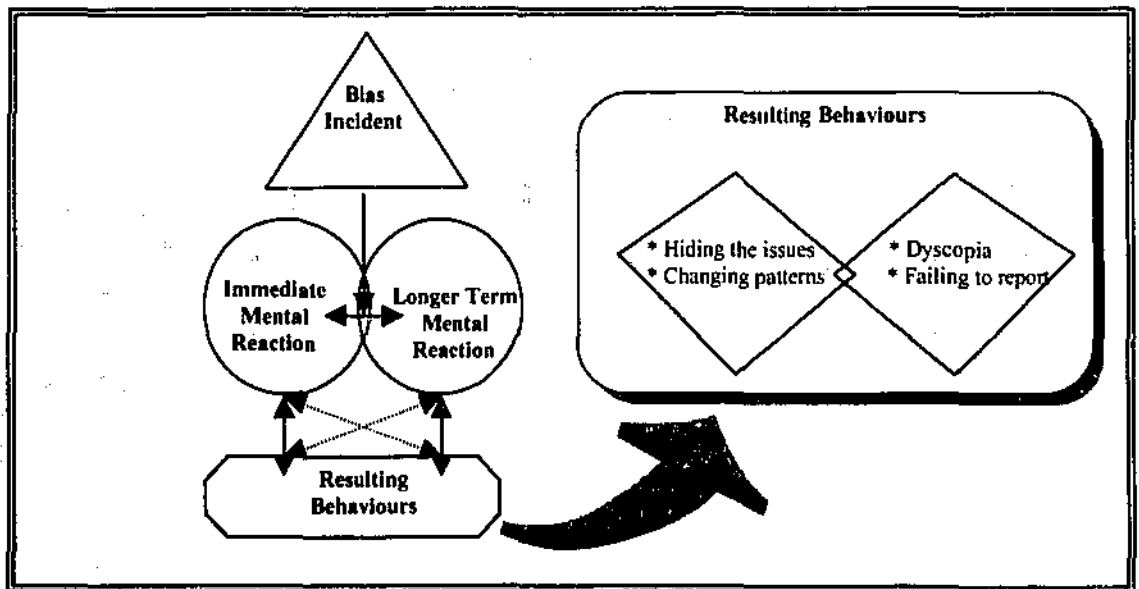
Figure 10 Resulting behaviours

The phenomenological examination of the lived experience adopted in this study

has highlighted that the immediate and longer term mental reactions do not impact

on these men as lone reactions, but are inter-related. The oppressive dogmas

discussed in earlier chapters were at times devastating for many of the participants

and resulted in a failure of men to cope with even the most routine matters. The

physical and emotional impact of this phenomenon has been identified as causing

immense conflict for men.

> During this time I could barely get through. My work
> really, really suffered.... (FF)
> It changed me so that I became antisocial.... (I)
> The sexual aspect of our marriage went down hill....For
> me to have sex with her I had to fantasise about men.... (P)
> I wasn't being... (FF)
> It made me pull out of year 12 because of the pressure of study and
> the peer pressure that I was receiving. (E)

Hiding the issues

Lacking self worth, feeling disempowered and perceiving that society means them

harm led men to determine that their only recourse was to hide the incident from

others. Fearing the consequences of disclosure, some men identified a need to deal

with the experience by telling no-one and therefore 'suffering in silence'.

> (Following bashing) I just went home. I wasn't going to
> tell anybody 'cause I'm not open about this...(V)
> There wasn't any point in telling anyone. I just thought I
> would put myself through a harrowing situation... (GG)
> I felt like I played down myself all the time. That I was
> always scared to tell people who I really was. That I was a gay
> man. (A))
> No I didn't report it to anyone. I certainly would have
> liked to have done so but like most people in that situation
> (professional man experiencing threatened violence and

harrassment) *I am distrustful of the police and the response...*
(G)

For some men it was difficult to hide the issues from others. Some bore the

physical marks of an assault, others the emotional scars that affected their ability to

cope with day to day issues. For these men the need to lie, to preserve their

physical and emotional wellbeing, was the only option available to them. Whilst

this need to lie preserved them in the short term, it was also counterproductive

inasmuch as it resulted in many men never confronting the issues fully.

> *I hadn't told him I was gay or camp....It was very much*
> *part of your day to day existence. I mean your whole fuckin life*
> *was a coverup.... (K)*
> *I don't want any hassles.... There weren't any witnesses.*
> *I'm going to stick to my original story. I don't feel very good in*
> *doing so, but, it's in my own interest and I certainly don't want*
> *anyone else to know about this... (M)*
> *I didn't tell people what had happened. I worked out a*
> *story if I was asked...(Y)*

Another coping mechanism men adopted to ensure self-preservation was the need

to deny their homosexuality. Perceiving that society accepted the heterosexual

lifestyle, many men felt the need to hide what they believed was their true inner

lifestyle -- that of a gay man.

> *I find life becomes one big act. You have got two*
> *lifestyles and at the moment I'm finding it very difficult to*
> *separate the two. I even joined the armed forces. Make a man*
> *out of me. That was when I was 20 and thought I can't be gay.*
> *So I thought I would go and do something really masculine. I*
> *joined the navy. I only lasted six months... (E)*
> *I lead two lives....I mean I have to fill out the reporting of*
> *my weekend, of what has actually happened. A completely*

different life. It's not really possible to get involved in social functions at work because of the homophobia... (L)

I felt guilty and ashamed....I was aware that sex with another guy was quite good....I was going out looking for it, two timing my wife and going out looking for it. Hiding behind the marriage and having a bit on the side... (P)

Living with the fear of what has happened has had a strong impact on the way these men now lead their lives. Perceiving that such events can and will happen again, they constantly have to alter their behaviours as a mechanism of protection. The different mechanisms that they have chosen to adopt as a means of coping with the trauma has a profound impact on every one of them. Altering normal life practices, or living in silence about the incident does not help the individual adopt a mechanism by which they are able to work through the event mentally, thus resolving the inner confusion or conflict they are experiencing. Instead, by changing life patterns, these men where unable to address the issues front on.

Change patterns

Following a negative experience, participants adopted different mechanisms as a means of protecting themselves from any further incidents. Many of the mechanisms adopted by participants, whilst protecting themselves from the immediate situation at hand, were very disruptive for them as functioning members of society. That is, they perceived the need to resign from jobs or to move from the town in which they were living. For many, the withdrawal, which was meant to reduce the after-effects of their traumatic experience, actually resulted in such a

significant change in lifestyle that the memories of the experience will be with them forever.

> *It was why I moved. I was becoming a target down there (southern country town) for any person or persons who may or may not have been gay but had a complaint. I was going to be the target whether I was the person or not. I felt it wasn't a big enough town to get lost in and that I had to go somewhere else... (CC)*
>
> *I changed my behaviour and went very straight for quite a long time... (O)*
>
> *I don't go out on my own any more....If I go to the club I always go with someone. I feel that everyone is watching me and if I go in or come out on my own then they will get me... (AA)*

Living in the general community and receiving little support for gay men created the environment where men felt they were unable to continue on their career paths and were thus forced to change.

> *I can get my discharge* (from navy) *on the 28th of this month* (April 1995). *I'll go back to school... (X)*
>
> *...I haven't done teaching since 1988... (H)*
>
> *Because of the harrassment I insisted on finding something new. (L)*
>
> *I went for support from the boss and the union and I couldn't get any support so I resigned and left my career. (DD)*

Other men did not speak of changing career paths but spoke of necessary changes in their life when trying to avoid further experiences of bias or harassment.

> *I didn't finish year 12.... I did three subjects, but ended up doing a secretarial course and becoming a secretary instead. I did want to go to university. That sort of, was nipped in the bud. I couldn't go ahead with that.....all my dreams of going to university had been squashed. (E)*
>
> *I worked there for six months before I saw the general manager and told him exactly why I resigned. (I)*

> *I moved out about a year later....The town wasn't big
> enough to get lost in that I had to go somewhere else. It
> certainly had an influence on me. (CC)*

For other men, there was an altered functioning in what they viewed as the

heterosexual community. This required that they continue to live a lie and portray

the image of the heterosexual man when around others. Other men removed

themselves from social contact with others.

> *I no longer went to heterosexual venues, clubs, social
> gatherings. I stopped seeing heterosexual friends. I went totally
> alone for quite a while, for nearly eight months I went totally
> insular. I didn't even seek out gay contact either. I went into
> myself completely. (DD)*
> *I was very intimidated by this* (threatened with physical
> violence) *So much so that I altered my lifestyle considerably for
> a period of some six to nine months. (G)*

For these men, having to make one or all of these life changing decisions because

of their sexual orientation and the perception that they would receive unfavourable

attention from the general community has devastating affects. Not following

career paths, not being able to follow lifestyle choices, and perceiving that their

life is in danger most of the time, impacts physically, socially and mentally on

these homosexually active men.

Dyscopia

For some of these men, the impact of living on a day to day basis, sensing a loss of

control over their life and an increased vulnerability, led them to describe a sense

of inability to cope with basic life events. This, linked with the heterosexist

attitudes and a devalued impression of their own self worth had a devastating impact. Whilst some believed they could overcome issues in the short term by discussion and disclosure, others reported that they were unable to do this. They felt that their dyscopia became entrenched in their lives.

This dyscopia was further emphasised for many of the participants when they perceived that those they expected to support them had abandoned them. This resulted in a personal solitude. Many men reported being surrounded by family and friends but still being unable to seek their help regarding the traumas they were experiencing. This caused them to withdraw physically, personally and socially. They spoke of feeling alone even when surrounded by other people in the community.

> *I couldn't talk to anyone... it was so scary I just decided to keep my mouth shut. (A)*
> *I didn't have anywhere to go. I didn't really have any gay friends... (BB)*
> *There wasn't anyone else to talk to... (CC)*
> *Well that was just it. I really didn't have any friends to talk to... (FF)*

The impact of such actions created a personal conflict where many men perceived they had no direction to seek help.

Perceiving that they were alone and unable to turn to friends for help, they also described a sense of social isolation. For some men, this social isolation was two

pronged. They perceived that the gay community isolated them and made it difficult to receive any help or support.

We had no support network. We had no one to call.
There was no support line, nothing, and I felt really isolated.....it
was a very violent situation and I had no one to turn to. (U)
Because we live in the country area, the cost of phone
calls are quite expensive. To have had a toll free number to ring
to say to someone, look, can I talk to you about this issue, on my
level as a gay person. There was no one to talk to about it. (U)
I didn't have the support of gay friends to help me out or
through this....I didn't have the gay support. (A)

In addition to the perceived lack of support systems within the gay community, these men experienced further mental reactions when moving in the general community. As has been discussed in Chapter six, men identified anger at society for not supporting gay men when they were exposed to bias incidents. This anger also generated perceptions that the general community does not have a place for gay men; that they do not belong. Adopting these heterosexist beliefs, the men in this study perceived a form of social isolation within the general community.

In the end I was alienated. I just became a loner. (I)
They would get up from the table and refuse to sit with
me... (DD)
I was keeping very much a single and lonely life...(K)
It's like being isolated on a desert island, no one to talk to or
anything... (X)
There was no protection for me. There was no support
or protection for me... (DD)

Fearing publicity, disclosure or increased violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution, many men felt there was no other option but to isolate themselves from the rest of the community. The impact of this isolation meant that they were

not comfortable in mixing with other people. They became imprisoned in their own personal hells.

Failure to report

In addition to hiding the issues from others, or lying about what had happened, another behaviour adopted in the pursuit of self-preservation focused on failure to report the incidents. Previously it has been discussed that these men feared the police would disclose the incident to others in their life. What this study has also identified is that they feared the police would instigate some form of violence or harassment. This belief that the police would impose further physical or emotional pain on the men resulted in their adopting a behaviour which culminated in them failing to seek any sort of legal justice.

For some men this fear of police harassment was based on personal experience.

> ...They seem to hassle gays. They go around beats, I've seen them, they go around wasting taxpayers' money and they patrol the beats like the old boys and basically hassle people......
> (V)
> I am in fear of the police. On the way home I was picked up by the police and accused of prowling because, what was a person like me driving around the town at three o'clock in the morning. Of course they took me to back to the police station to question me. I had to ring my friends at four o'clock in the morning and get them to come down and say that I had been playing cards with them.... (CC)
> They shouted at me and came threatening to me, quite threatening and overbearing, shouting at me.....I thought any minute now they were going to clobber me....I was quite shaken by that... (GG)

As with internalised heterosexism (discussed earlier) for some men, the fear of violence or harassment from the police was not grounded on any personal experience, yet it remained a real fear. Anecdotal evidence and media reports had promulgated various accounts of others' experiences. These were enough to influence how men were to react to their own experience.

> *My problem with it was, to complain to the Commissioner of Police about the incident would mean that I would have to identify myself and I have heard of people being intimidated by the police as a result of those sort of complaints.... (G)*
>
> *I reckon as well that if you go in and say I'm gay and I was bashed, I reckon then they will mark your file somewhere. These bastards keep files on everyone and I reckon that they put you down as a poofter and you know, what happens if there is some child sex abuse case or something. They round up the usual suspects and if you have a label on file, that's it, you're done. (AA)*
>
> *Having to go to the police and report it....I don't know. You see these shows and the courts and how they grill the people and the accused is made to feel, well as if they instigated it... (P)*

Conclusion

In conclusion, these descriptions show how many of the participants taking part in this study identified one or more mechanisms adopted in order to cope with day to day life practices. The need to preserve self and ensure that no further pain was to be imposed on them became an all-important requirement. The means by which this was to be achieved was not of immediate importance to them. If it meant giving up house and home, job, family and friend contact, then that was the price some paid. Furthermore, in maintaining as safe an environment, as they perceived they could, some men changed the facts about incidents so others would not find

out the exact truth. Others altered the way they went about their normal routines. For many it meant never being able to seek assistance from police as they held little faith for their own safety. Whatever the longer term cost, if these men thought they could ease the pain by adopting a particular mechanism, they did so. For many, no matter what mechanism they perceived they needed to adopt, the coping behaviours had a negative impact, as they were not able to maintain their normal practices. By altering behaviour in order to cope in the short term, these men were placing themselves in such a position that they were constantly reminded of the negative event that had occurred. They were unable to put it in the past and move on with their lives.

Chapter Nine

The Lived Experience

Introduction

The essence of phenomenological research is to explore and describe the lived

experience of its participants, to identify the themes and draw together a

description of those lived experiences. However, the process of separating the data

into categories and themes can sometimes result in the total picture of each

individual's experience being lost, leaving the reader with an academic

appreciation of the experience and not a full understanding of the human picture.

This composite picture helps in the search for patterns, highlighting human

behaviour and experiences. Rather than trying to understand the structure and

process from pre-conceived notions of homosexuality and incidents of abuse, this

work seeks to unravel the phenomenon in its own terms; and these experiences,

related by the participants, can only be understood in this way. But does this

composite deny the uniqueness of experience of humans? – No.

Adhering to the philosophies of humanism, as discussed in chapter four,

phenomenological studies need to be transmissible. That is, they must be free of

jargon and accessible to the men in society who are affected by the issues being

studied. The experience of what it feels like to be violated, harassed or beaten due to homosexual orientation is therefore further reflected upon in this chapter. It is not a generalisation of the findings, for the reasons discussed elsewhere, but it is a summary of the experiences reported most commonly. For convenience, the composite man will be referred to as Adam.

Adam's story

These are the experiences of Adam (the composite man), a young man who lives in a country town and is surrounded by a large network of family, friends and colleagues. At times Adam enjoys sexual encounters with other men, but finding it difficult to meet them, he goes to the public toilet at the local park. These meetings, however, do not always go unnoticed by other members of this small community and Adam is the focus of insulting letters and verbal taunts from those who have become aware of his practices.

Soon the verbal and written harassment is replaced by more serious attacks. He is pushed to the ground when coming out of nightclubs and once is beaten so severely he requires hospitalisation. Discrimination and persecution becomes evident at work. These experiences affected him so strongly that they result in an increase in psychosocial quandaries associated with living as a man who has sex with other men.

The incidences of bias have a big impact on Adam. They arouse a variety of reactions including: fear, anger, hopelessness, powerlessness, anxiety, frustration, vulnerability, shame and confusion. These mental reactions and inner conflicts force him to make substantial changes in his life. Living in a small town becomes too difficult and he is forced to leave and move to the city where perhaps he can lose himself in the crowds, where he hopes to be the man he wants to be without fear of others condemning him for his actions.

The most dominant mental reaction he experiences is fear. He fears that disclosure/discovery will lead to rejection by his girlfriend, his family and his friends, and will lead to loss of employment, loss of social standing and to social isolation. In addition to this, he fears that the disclosure/discovery of his sexual orientation would mean constant exposure to violence, harassment, discrimination and persecution. Because of this fear, Adam feels he needs to make constant changes to his daily routines. The impact of such actions is to deny him the privilege of establishing routine practices by which he can feel comfortable and in control of his life. He is constantly aware that his safety is threatened and that he needs to divert any attention away from himself.

Having to place limitations on life practices because of fears for physical and mental wellbeing eventually creates the belief that he is a lesser man. Thoughts like, 'I felt like dirt' or 'I felt indecent and sordid' indicate that he believes he is

unworthy of life's pleasures. His inner person becomes isolated, denied the freedom to express the love and emotions that go with loving or being loved by another man, mentally, physically and spiritually. He feels he is never able to be automatic, impulsive and outgoing.

As well as fear, Adam experiences great anger. He feels anger at society for perpetrating the ideal that the heterosexual lifestyle is the only acceptable lifestyle and that alternatives are unacceptable. He feels anger at a society that 'makes me act in a way that is not how my heart says I should'. He feels even angrier when he perceives that society is unresponsive to the events that are happening to him and therefore he feels unable to shout out about what is happening to him.

Living in fear of further bias and with anger that society cares little for what is happening engenders a sense of hopelessness in Adam. He believes that there is nothing he can do to prevent further episodes of bias. He believes there is no where for him to turn to for help. He feels that life has dealt him a blow and there is no resolution to the problem because he is gay and no one cares. All this means for Adam, that there is no reason to even try to attain his life goals. He perceives that he is repeatedly being knocked down for being a homosexually active man.

The anger, fears, frustration and hopelessness all culminate in an erosion of any self worth or self esteem he may have had, until eventually he isolates himself

from those around him. Perceiving that there is no avenue available to address his turmoil, this self-perpetuating continuous cycle becomes increasingly destructive as he physically and mentally alters his lifestyle and life practices. The secondary victimisation results in his failing to achieve life ambitions.

In coping with these turmoils, he becomes emotionally insular in order to protect himself. So as not to experience any further pain he becomes a passive recipient of whatever life brings him. In doing this he further alienates himself from society, becoming uninvolved, apathetic, isolated, bewildered and without hope. Whilst this emotional isolation provides a protective shell that prevents a repetition of previous pain, it further reduces participation in life.

When Adam perceives his experiences to be a constant in his life, then his adaptive capabilities are reduced, and there is a lowering of integrated functioning. When he perceives he is constantly open to ongoing violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution, his adaptive resources become depleted and his coping mechanisms begin to fail. Where previously he was able to find some means of dealing with his mental turmoil, therefore resisting psychological disintegration, now there is a lowering of resistance that allows for the introduction of exaggerated and inappropriate defense mechanisms. Eventually he contemplates suicide as the only answer to the problem.

Not being able to overcome the crises that disrupt his internal equilibrium begins to erode his self-esteem. In general, people are able to make a good recovery once a stressful situation is over. For Adam however, there is longer lasting damage to his self-esteem and an increased vulnerability. His experience is not only acutely damaging, but it also weakens the fundamental stability of his personality. This in turn has limited his resourcefulness in coping with other situations and stressful challenges that may occur in other areas of his life.

With an increased sense of powerlessness and a loss of control, he becomes vulnerable to social criticisms of homosexuality. He is constantly reminded that society's laws do little to stop discrimination directed towards him. Because of this he begins to internalise society's view that homosexuality is wrong. In addition to the mental turmoil already being experienced, this internalisation of heterosexist attitudes further debases his self image and self worth as a human being.

The impact of internalisation of heterosexist attitudes, debased self-image, devaluation of self and personal solitude affects Adam's functioning within society and as an individual. The longer term effect is that he perceives the need to adopt behaviours by which 'main stream society' will view him as a normal heterosexual community member. These false life practices then serve to constantly remind him that he is not living the full life he could or would like to. The impact of this

is that he continues to view himself as a lesser individual. He perceives the need to continually deny his true self. He fails to achieve his potential in his working life due to the constant need to hide his true self for fear that identification will lead to further violence, discrimination or persecution. Furthermore, he experiences inner conflicts resulting in problems when functioning as a social or sexual being.

The power of reactions such as internalised heterosexism, loss of control, anger, and fear of ongoing exposure not only impact on Adam's physical and mental wellbeing, but also on his ability to cope with activities of daily living. The reactions affect him so much that he believes he needs to take added precautions so as to avoid further exposure, such as not venturing outside after dark, driving different routes home every night, and not leaving nightclubs alone. He is constantly aware of the possible exposure to incidents when moving about his own community and of not being able to seek physical contact with other men for fear of physical or mental abuse.

The feelings of hopelessness and frustration are further exacerbated, as he perceives the need to adopt negative coping mechanisms as a means of survival. These include hiding the issues or living two lives: the heterosexual man who meets society's expectations of what is 'male', and the homosexual man who needs to hide his lifestyle from those who may cause physical or mental harm.

This form of self-censoring, of having to constantly maintain a façade, causes him much stress. This stress is associated with a fear that he may let down his guard and be exposed and thus further violated.

The combination of the immediate mental reactions and the longer term mental impact, with their possible implications, results in Adam being unable to perform effectively when attending to his routine daily activities. Feeling that he is being controlled by his mental turmoil, he senses that he is not able to cope with activities of daily living. Simple tasks, such as getting up and getting out of the house, become more and more difficult. He no longer finds the desire to meet and socialise with his friends and family, instead settling to lock himself away in the safety of his home.

This self-imposed imprisonment becomes the one mechanism that he can adopt to ensure his personal safety. Having already given up his job as a means of escaping harassment and persecution, Adam now lives a solitary life in the fear that those close to him will discover what has been happening in his life.

As a means of protecting himself and therefore preserving his physical and emotional wellbeing, he devises false stories about the changes in his life. There is the story about how he got his broken ribs and fractured nose in a bar fight after Saturday's game of football, and how work was just so bad that he really felt he

needed a career change. There is also the story about how he always wanted to move away from the country and live in the city. All are untruths, but necessary if he is to hide the issues from his parents, brothers and sisters and friends. By continuing to lie to those he cares for, Adam knows he is not confronting his own problems. His shame, fear and confusion are all-consuming, as is his fear of rejection by those for whom he cares.

In organising his life so that it appears he is conforming to the expectations of the dominant heterosexual society, Adam adopts another persona that he believes everyone will like and accept. He continues to have sexual relations with women; he goes out with all his mates and makes derogatory remarks about poofters and what they deserve; and at Sunday lunch with his parents he talks of one day having a big wedding and six children. He does not talk about his desires to be close to another man; of the love he feels when he and his male partner make love; of wanting to share every day with that one special man. These hopes and dreams are withheld, for fear of stimulating further attacks. Believing that he must keep these truths from those around him, Adam continues to live the life that is expected of him rather than the life he dreams of.

The impact of this mental trauma on Adam is immense. Not only does it affect his mental state and behaviours, but his feelings of frustration and social isolation are further enhanced by the lack of rural social and community support networks. He

speaks of a self-doubt with regard to his involvement within the greater social structure. He feels a personal sense of isolation with no avenue of escape.

He recounts the isolation that results from having no one with whom to discuss issues. The increasing self doubt and isolation that leads to heightened internalised heterosexist beliefs, the change in lifestyle patterns, the isolation from other homosexually active men and the constant reminder of heterosexism within society, all increase his internal beliefs that homosexuality is wrong, therefore, he must be deviant in some way.

The effects of heterosexism have profound affects on him. He perceives society to be hostile towards him, therefore he constantly needs to be on his guard regarding disclosure of his sexual orientation. The constant exposure to social situations which triggers an anger in him culminates in an upset of his internal equilibrium, resulting in self doubt. As a result he physically and emotionally withdraws from society.

When confronted with the issue of reporting these bias incidents, Adam is further challenged by his belief that services available to him are inappropriate. He does not identify as a gay man so he feels it inappropriate to speak to the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service. He also feels it is not appropriate to contact the AIDS Council 'hard to reach line' as he does not have issues concerning

HIV/AIDS to discuss. Adding to the difficulties in contacting these agencies is the limitation in free access (1800 phone numbers) from the country. This exacerbates his feelings of isolation and confusion.

When reporting to counsellors, his concern is that they are not familiar with the issues surrounding him as a man who has sex with other men, his lifestyle, his turmoil and his concerns. He perceives that the issue would be trivialised and not resolved at all.

One of the strongest reasons for him not wishing to report any form of bias incident is the fear of disclosure of his lifestyle. The turmoil associated with the disclosure of the incident creates a tremendous dilemma for him. His fear of exposure to significant others if he does disclose raises the question as to whether he should ever disclose. He is very aware that his experiences, feelings and actions are causing him to live under immense stress. Nondisclosure does not eliminate that stress, but then, given the current climate, would disclosure eliminate the stress or add to it? This is a question that remains unanswered for him as he fears what will happen if he were to test it.

The perceptions and beliefs, the distrust, the feelings of inferiority as a member of society, are the longer term consequences of his experiences which are preventing

him from reporting the crimes. Justified or not, this is the essence of what he believes.

Alone in his room in the city, isolated and unemployed, Adam reflects on why he has never discussed his experiences and feelings with anyone. Logic would assume that he has a close relationship with at least one other with whom he could share a negative experience. His answer is yes, there is a good friend whom he could tell, however, the shame of having sought sexual contact at a public toilet is too much and he is uncomfortable about talking to anyone for fear of being condemned or judged negatively. As a result he shuts in these feelings. This reinforces his internalised heterosexist attitudes and results in self-condemnation and self hate of his lifestyle.

Conclusion

This description of the lived experience, the thoughts, feelings, stresses, and behaviours have been described through the actions of a composite man, Adam. He has been forced to endure physical and mental pain that has resulted in him having to make many changes in his life; changes that he would have preferred not to make. Life for Adam has not been the happy and fulfilling one he had once dreamed he was going to have.

Chapter Ten

Discussion on the Findings

Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore significant aspects of the experience of surviving violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution of homosexually active men. The research findings discussed in this chapter represent findings that support current knowledge, contribute to new knowledge, or contradict existing research findings. This chapter will offer a discussion on the findings, focusing on what they mean for the men who participated in this study.

Whereas other studies (Comstock, 1989; Cox, 1994; Dean, et al., 1992; GLAD, 1994; Herek, 1989; Herek and Berrill, 1992; Le Blanc, 1991; Van de Ven, et al., 1998) have listed reactions to violence, harassment, and discrimination, this study has extended the research by exploring these in more detail.

It is important to highlight that the outcome of phenomenological research is complex because of the richness of the data collected. Furthermore the mental reactions and resulting behaviours identified do not follow a linear passage. Men did not experience an immediate reaction and then move on to experience a longer term reaction before establishing a resulting behaviour as an outcome of the experience, as would be represented diagrammatically in figure 11.

| Fear ——▶ Anger——▶ Hopelessness ——▶ Devaluation of Self ——▶ Dyscopia |
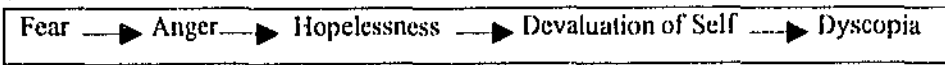
Figure 11 Linear representation of phenomenological themes

Men's reactions following an incident were identified as being multi-directional and multi-leveled. These responses are represented diagrammatically in figure 12. Some men reacted by immediately changing their behaviours when exposed to fear. Others felt that the incident affected them in such a way that they were able to cope in their social environment, but were experiencing other reactions when moving in their work or home environment. Others experienced mental reactions that created difficulties in their social interactions in both the gay community and heterosexual community.
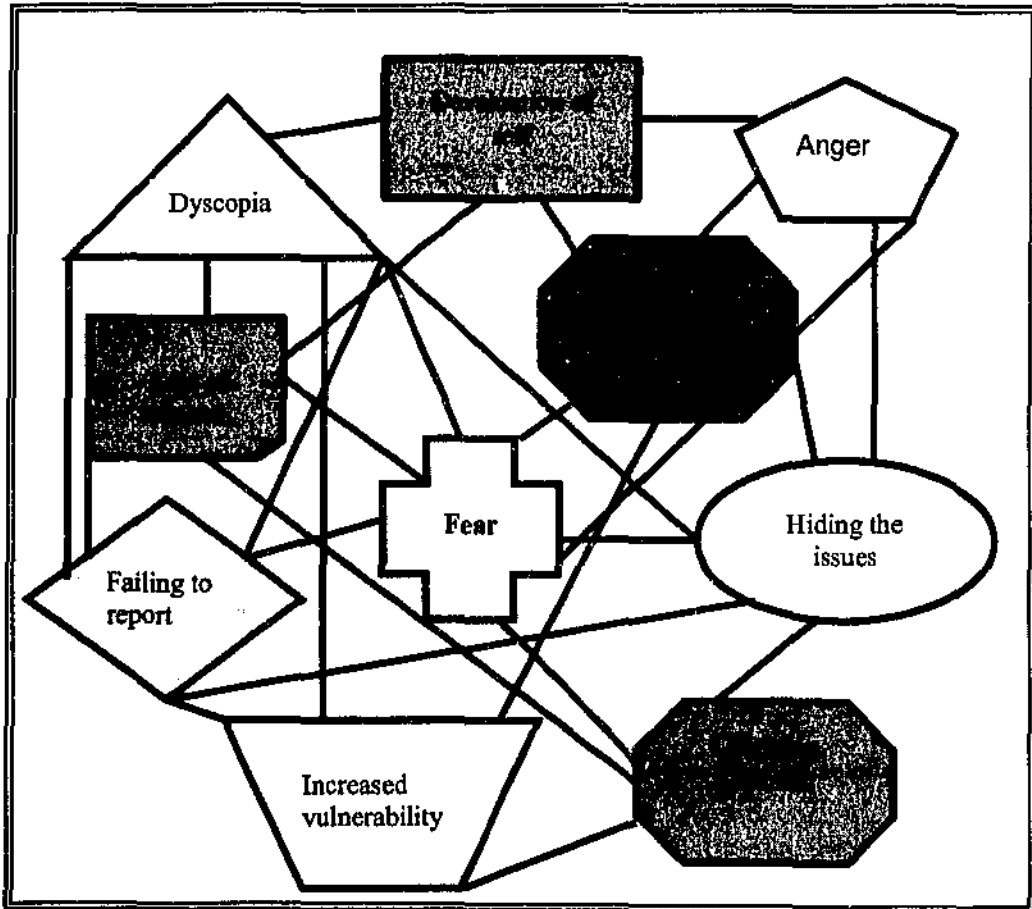
Figure 12 Diagrammatic example of the multi-leveled form of themes experienced at any time

An important point to focus on at this juncture is that the themes identified had

additional components within their own structures. The thematic structures and

their components will be discussed under the category headings identified.

Issues resulting from physical incidents

This grouping was concerned with describing the issues that resulted from

exposure to bias incidents perpetrated against homosexually active men.

Prior to this research there had been few qualitative studies documenting bias

incidents perpetrated against homosexually active men and the mental responses

these incidents have on them. This investigation has gone some way towards

achieving this by documenting violence, harassment, discrimination and

persecution of such survivors.

One notable issue realised here is that these men have not only survived single

incidents of bias, but are reporting a number of different experiences. Many told

of violence, ranging from being pushed to the ground when coming out of

nightclubs, to brutal physical beatings requiring hospitalisation and multiple

operations to correct the physical damage done. Others told of discrimination or

persecution in the workplace and on the streets, which was so emotionally brutal

that they needed to run from their perpetrators. The findings concur with the

descriptions of incidents outlined in other studies and so will not be discussed

further (Baird, et al., 1994; Cox, 1994; Le Blanc, 1991).

Immediate Mental Reactions

The themes in this grouping are concerned with the immediate mental reaction

homosexually active men experienced following their exposure to the bias

incident. They include fear, anger, and oppressive dogma.

Fear

The literature suggests that fear incapacitates homosexually active men following

any exposure to a bias incident (Anderson, 1992; D'Augelli, 1992; Griffin, 1994).

The results from the studies referenced above concur with the findings of other

studies when outlining the response of fear. However, analysis of previous reports

highlights that researchers have placed labels on responses but have not identified

what they mean to the survivors. An example being Griffin (1994) who identified

fear but failed to discuss the issue in her summary in which she reported that 50%

of teachers/ex-teachers and 50% of students/ex-students described fear. Likewise,

Anderson, (1982, p.150) discusses how man's "fear for his life, and his recognition

of powerlessness in the face of life-and-death situation, can prove overwhelming".

Both these studies indicate that fear has a major impact on the lives of men

exposed to it, however, they do not describe the fear nor do they identify the

impact of living with the fear.

Some empirical investigations have quantified the level of fear experienced, however they have not attempted to analyse the meaning of fear and its impact on survivors (Griffin, 1984). Sandroussi and Thompson (1995, p. 19) described the data and point out that "being shoved or bashed or physically intimidated caused the most fear". The authors also described the level of fear when cross-tabulated by the three police districts where most gay men and lesbians live, and concluded by analysing the fear of victimisation in the gay community compared to the general community. Whilst this knowledge of the notion of fear is important for researchers, it does not give us a full understanding of the lived experience for those living with this reaction.

This study's findings provide a more in-depth examination of the experience of fear as described by the participants. More importantly, it has identified that the notion of fear is multifaceted. For the men in this study, fear was not a response to be described as fear alone. For some men, this response focused on the event itself. They described it as an immediate reaction to an incident that often led to a concern for their physical safety in the future. They believed that they were going to receive more brutal assaults and they lived in fear of the day that it would happen to them again. The impact of living with this component of fear was that men constantly felt threatened and unsafe. For some men, they were not able to go out of their homes alone because they believed that they would be targets of further violence or harassment. The finding from this study provides evidence to support the suggestion made by the Lewisham Gay Alliance (1991) who stated

that there was a strong response to the level of fear and that men felt they would be exposed to more violence.

The consequences of living with this fear had an impact on the men's ability to take control. The literature suggests that when people know what to expect, how to approach a problem, or the resources available to them to address the issues, then they have a better chance of coming through the event with minimum disarray (Rachman, 1978). However, the participants in this research expressed the apprehension they experienced following an incident when they perceived that they had no way of dealing with the problem. Believing that they could not seek support from the police, that there were no avenues to turn to for support, they perceived that they were not in control of their lives.

The issue surrounding fear of others learning of the incident has been discussed in the literature (Boxer and Cohler, 1989; Cwayna, Remafedi, and Treadway, 1991; Hershberger and D'Augelli, 1995; Martin and Hetrick, 1988). Men have indicated that they failed to report or discuss their experiences with police for such reasons as, feelings of embarrassment, fear that police would do nothing, perceptions that the assault was not serious enough (Baird, et al., 1994; Cox, 1994; Lewisham Gay Alliance, 1992; Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995).

D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993) reported that one third of their sample feared losing friends upon disclosure of a bias incident. The perception that others could

learn of their sexual orientation and the practices that some had been partaking in instilled a shame that resulted in men hiding all aspects of their experience. This investigation substantiates the findings in previous studies, however, it has further demonstrated that not only did these participants fear losing the support of those close to them, but this mental reaction resulted in them becoming isolated and vulnerable to ongoing torment. In addition to this, this study has established that men not only feared disclosure of their sexual orientation, but this fear prevented them from developing coping mechanisms to overcome the mental reaction of fear. The effect of not discussing their experiences was that the issues were never addressed and consequently never resolved.

This research has advanced the body of knowledge when focussing on the issue of fear. The consequence of being constantly exposed to this fear meant that these homosexually active men were to experience a multitude of feelings and reactions. Because of this fear, they perceived a need to make constant changes to their daily routines. The consequence of such actions are that men are denied the privilege of establishing routine practices by which they can feel comfortable and in control of their lives. They were constantly aware that their safety was threatened and that they needed to divert any attention away from themselves as best they could.

The issues that arose as a result of living with fear following any bias incident had tremendous implications for these men. Carson, Butcher and Coleman (1988) report on fear experienced by soldiers following trauma and identified an

increased hypersensitivity. This study supports Carson's et al. (1988) suggestion in that hypersensitivity also became an issue for the homosexually active men following exposure to a bias incident. Living in constant fear, men overreacted when confronted with normal everyday situations such as a friend coming up from behind and placing their hand on the survivor's shoulder. This action produced marked overreactions that were sometimes intensified when the action bore a direct association with the bias incident, for example unexpected physical contact. This study provides additional evidence that men not only experienced hypersensitivity but this reaction was further exacerbated when men perceived they could not address the problem. As a result their hypersensitivity often caused feelings of anger which added to their anxiety by making them aware of their loss of control of events.

Having to place limitations on their life practices because of fears for physical and mental wellbeing eventually created the belief that they are a lesser person. Comments like, "*I felt lower than life"(DD)* or "*I felt dirty, used and abused"(FF)*, indicated that some men believed themselves to be unworthy of life's pleasures. The inner person became isolated, denied the freedom to express the love and emotions that go with loving or being loved by another man - mentally, physically and spiritually, of never being able to "*be spontaneous and free "(H)*.

The physical consequences of experiencing such reactions are multifaceted. Medical science has documented a substantial amount of literature regarding the

impact of living with fear and how that can lead to stress. Stress directly affects

blood pressure, which in turn impacts on the cardiovascular system causing

tachycardia, angina, and myocardial infarctions. Living with an imbalanced

internal equilibrium can also cause gastrointestinal disturbances from minor

complaints such as gastric reflux, epigastric discomfort, constipation or diarrhoea,

to duodenal ulcers, gastric bleeds and bowel obstructions. Other physiological

impacts can result from the body's inability to fight off invading bacteria or

viruses, or in a number of respiratory disruptions from hyperventilation to the

aggravation of asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema. Additionally, stress can

manifest externally with the presence of skin disorders such as dermatitis, and

eczema. These physical alterations in the health of homosexually active men,

coupled with the mental consequences of surviving a bias incident, further impact

on their mental and social wellbeing.

Anger

Like fear, this study identified that anger has differing foci. The literature has

devoted little importance to the thematic component of anger nor its impact on the

men experiencing it, with one investigation by Herek et al. (1997) finding that

participants experienced some anger however, it was not statistically significant.

Other researchers have referred to anger, but have attached little detail to their

discussion. When discussing the emotional and behavioural responses to attacks,

Barnes and Ephross (1994) noted that 67.8% of their respondents identified that

they were angry at the perpetrator. This issue, however, was not discussed with regard to the effect this anger had on the individual.

Barnes and Ephross (1994) suggest that men were angry at the perpetrator for inflicting the hurt on them. However, the open ended questioning adopted for this research allowed the men to further describe the anger they were feeling. From these detailed descriptions, it has been demonstrated that men were not only experiencing an anger directed at the perpetrator, but were also experiencing an anger that was not directed at any thing or any one, but simply at the fact that they had had to live through the incident.

As well as anger directed at the perpetrator, a focus of anger identified in this research was an anger that was self-directed. Many of the participants expressed anger that they should never have allowed themselves to be exposed to the incident in the first place. The conflict this response created for these men was one of personal insulation. In blaming themselves for the pain they were experiencing, coupled with the anger that they were feeling because they believed they had been let down by society, men became resigned to having to restrict their life practices. Carson et al. (1988) implies that individuals protect themselves from further hurt by becoming recipients of whatever life brings them. This research has determined that these homosexually active men were overwhelmed with an anger that caused many to insulate themselves from others. Furthermore, this study has determined that in using this as a defense mechanism, these men

insulated themselves as a means of protecting themselves from more pain. The consequence of this action is that they are not recognising that life involves taking calculated risks, therefore, they are denying themselves the opportunity to live full and healthy lives.

One more foci of anger ascertained by this research centred on the anger men felt towards society. They talked of anger at society for perpetrating the ideal that the heterosexual lifestyle is the only lifestyle and that alternatives are unacceptable, and at *"the system that forces people to have to act differently in different social settings"(O)*. Anger was also very real for men who perceived that society was unresponsive to the events that were happening to them and therefore they were *"not able to say, 'look, this has happened to me'"(G)*.

Bard and Sangrey (1979) have previously identified the impact regarding the displacement of anger. They stated however that this response emerged as the second part of a three stage model following victimisation; stage one = impact, stage two = recoil and stage three = reorganisation. The authors go on to identify that most victims successfully negotiate these stages to recover. Whilst this study concurs with Bard and Sangrey (1979), that men experience a displacement of anger, it has identified that this is an immediate response rather than one of recoil. Furthermore, this research has noted that most men continued to live with this anger and had not successfully negotiated a recovery. These findings would propose that the failure to negotiate a recovery stems from their failure to

reestablish a non threatening view of the world. As these homosexually active men continued to fear ongoing attacks they were not able to resolve their displacement of anger against society, they were not able to view the world as a safe non threatening environment, and therefore, could not view themselves as strong and autonomous individuals.

Oppressive dogma

Living in fear of further bias and with anger at themselves and society for caring little for what was happening, engendered in men a despotic and overwhelming combination of responses. The participants involved in this study perceived that there was nothing they could do to prevent further episodes of bias. The effect of this perception resulted in their believing they had nowhere to turn for help, that life had dealt them a blow and there was no resolution to the problem because *"I am gay I don't...have the same rights"(Y)*. Because these men perceived they were homosexually active men repeatedly being knocked down, they believed it to be pointless for them to try to strive for 'that special' dream.

The preceding chapters identified a number of oppressive dogmas experienced by these men. They include hopelessness/powerlessness, anxiety/frustration and confusion. These dogmas will now be further discussed with consideration given to the issue that arose from having to constantly live with them.

When addressing the theme of hopelessness/powerlessness there are four plausible ways of examining it. The first is that the issue can be viewed as resulting from a resolve that all dreams and goals have been destroyed and therefore they see no constructive direction in life. The second is that men see the situation as hopeless with no direction to go as they are homosexually active men and therefore vulnerable to ongoing attacks. The third approach from which this theme can be viewed is that this hopelessness evolves because men have adopted defensive behaviours (lied, hidden the issue) in dealing with their incident, therefore they now believe that they are trapped and have no way of living the life they desire. Finally, men perceived that it is hopeless for them to fight back, physically or legislatively, as they do not have the support of social or judicial agencies. The data suggests that the issue of hopelessness/powerlessness is not the result of just one of these viewpoints, but that every one of them is impacting on these men.

The literature suggests that hopelessness surfaces when homosexually active men feel powerless to do anything about the incident and that they perceive there is no hope of resolving the problem, however these studies have not addressed the issues resulting from experiencing it (Barnes and Ephross, 1994; Griffith, 1994). This study has determined that the issues related to this mental response have major implications for men.

The data show that homosexually active men were identified as retreating from the reality of their life practices to a less demanding personal status. The outcome of this is that men lowered their personal and professional aspirations; one man gave up his career as a teacher, another gave up aspirations of attending university, others moved homes and changed careers. Because of this form of regression, men are not dealing with their inner hurt. This learned reaction involved a measure of self-deception and prevented men from dealing directly with their devaluation of self. In addition to this, men started to operate on an automatic and habitual level relying on the deceptive lies they had created to cover their past. These lies became the normal part of the individual's consciousness, interfering with any effective resolution to the actual problem. This behaviour was maladaptive, as it became a predominant means of coping with the immediate reaction to a bias incident.

The literature has suggested that there are a number of psycho-physiological indicators for gay men following hate crimes. These included increased sleep difficulties, loss of confidence, anxiety, increased vulnerability and frustration (Ehrlich, 1990; Garnets, Herek and Levy 1992). Ehrlich (1990, p.360) examined the theme of anxiety further and concluded that "those who negatively regard their own ability to meet (their idealized) sex role expectations may find models of homosexual behaviour anxiety provoking". Ehrlich's (1990) quantitative study agrees with previous studies as it identified that those men who have not had their sex roles idealised have developed an anxiety with regard to homosexual

behaviour. This investigation provides evidence to support the literature and determined how it further impacted on them, as they became sexually frustrated in not being able to meet their sexual urges, and emotionally frustrated in not being able to live as a homosexually active man.

The anxiety these men are living, combined with a sense of vulnerability, not only caused them to question their sexuality but was increased by the failure of police and social groups to confront the issues and address the impact these events are having on homosexually active men. The more men felt threatened by the possibility that they were going to be exposed to an incident, the more anxious and vulnerable they became. This author describes this dogma as resulting from prolonged exposure to conflict. Because men perceived that they could be assaulted at any time, they continued to experience anxiety. Additionally, the longer they perceived that social and political leaders were not addressing the issue, the more anxious they became as they were convinced that the next experience was 'just around the corner'.

Adding further to the anxiety and inner conflict, some men perceived that they were unable to personally identify with the gay community, nor could they take pride in being part of that community. The men who experienced this anxiety lacked the concept of belonging, and became prone to isolation and confusion. Living with the inner conflict that they had no community support, they displayed

ongoing vulnerability, anxiety and frustration. With no mechanisms in place to resolve these feelings, the issues were perceived to increase over time.

Studies have shown that people experiencing mental reactions who live in unaccepting communities are prone to increased vulnerability and anxiety (Merbaum, 1977). Studying Israeli men who had been involved in the Yom Kippur war, Merbaum (1977) found that they not only showed extreme anxiety and physical complaints, but in many instances they appeared to become more disturbed over time. Merbaum (1977) claimed that this reaction was due to the community's unaccepting attitude. This research has determined that homosexually active men surviving a bias incident are experiencing this anxiety, as they too have to function on a daily basis in a community that they perceive is unaccepting of their actions and lifestyle. Because of this reaction, they are not only experiencing vulnerability, but also isolation, coupled with ongoing self-recrimination. These feelings exacerbated the men's already anxious situation.

The fears, anger, and oppressive dogma all culminate to erode any self worth or self esteem they may have, until eventually they isolate themselves from those around them. Perceiving that there are no avenues to address their turmoil, this self-perpetuating cycle impacts even more as they physically and mentally alter lifestyles and life practices. This secondary victimisation results in many survivors failing to achieve life ambitions and dreams for fear of exposing themselves to further bias incidents.

In coping with these turmoils, they became emotionally insular in order to protect themselves. So as not to experience any further pain they became passive recipients of whatever life bought them. In doing this they further alienated themselves from society, becoming uninvolved, apathetic, isolated, bewildered and without hope. Whilst this emotional isolation provides a protective shell that prevents a repetition of previous pain, it further reduced the individual's healthy, vigorous participation in life.

The consequences of this mental turmoil are very serious. Not only are they perceiving that bias incidents are to be a part of their daily life but by accepting it and living with the crises and failing to make it a social issue, they are also allowing society to ignore the issues.

Longer Term Mental Reactions

Living with the turmoil of surviving any bias incident and not being able to overcome the crises that disrupt the internal equilibrium, the inner chaos began to erode the men's persona. In general, people are able to make a good recovery once a stressful situation is over, however, in many cases involving the men in this study, there was longer lasting damage to their self esteem and an increased sense of vulnerability. As this research has determined, this experience was not only acutely damaging, but it also weakened the fundamental stability of the

personality. This in turn limited the men's resourcefulness in coping with other situations and stressful challenges.

This section will examine the longer term mental reactions and how they impacted the homosexually active men involved in this study. The central themes identified include; devaluation of self, increased vulnerability, loss of control and internalised heterosexism.

Devaluation of self

The issue of self-devaluation has been identified in the literature, however, a closer analysis as to its effect and implications has not been discussed (Bard and Sangrey, 1979; Garnets, et al., 1990). Garnets et al. (1990) suggests that the concept of self devaluation stems from the perception that survivors had experienced a loss of autonomy at the hands of the perpetrator, and because they were required to rely on others to help them recover from their victimisation. This investigation has provided evidence to support this suggestion. The participants talked of feeling trapped in their own confusion and isolation. For some men there was a perception that they had lost their identity as an individual, whereas others believed that they could no longer live the free life they felt they had the right to live.

The issue identified by Garnet et al. (1990) regarding reliance on others to assist men in overcoming victimisation was not evident in this data. Instead, the data

highlighted the phenomenon that men believed they had no where to turn for help; that society, organisations and the judiciary would or could not help. As a result of this perception, these men were not able to address their issues, therefore perceiving that they were not strong individuals and were deserving of whatever was happening. The consequences of this are that men sensed that they were trapped and therefore emotionally weak, as they could not confront their problems.

As humans we readily determine what we know, what we want, and what we will do by defining some basic assumptions about ourselves, the world we live, and the relationship between the two. From these basic assumption we are then able to structure our 'frame of reference', our guide, which assists us in dealing with difficulties in life. Included in this guide are our views of who we are, what we hope to become and what is important to us; in short, our view of self (Carson, et al., 1988). This evolutionary process however can also be the source of our self-devaluation and vulnerability.

Based on the frame of reference that has evolved over one's life, it is considered that individuals make daily decisions and acquire behaviours, however, they are often unaware of the basis on which these assumptions are grounded. Importantly, people can also be unaware that their assumptions are false or misguided. Building on this proposition, Vallacher, Wegner and Hoine (1980) suggests that the concept of 'self' can be seen as a product of rules from which one processes information and selects behaviour choices. Vallacher et al. (1980) describes this

as a sense of selfhood and goes on to identify that deficiencies or deviations in the development of self can cause someone to become vulnerable.

The concept that participants' personalised frame of reference had been defamed resulted in the belief that their 'self' was being threatened. The data provides evidence to support this in that men identified that their rules regarding behaviours and practices differed from the heterosexual community. In seeking physical and emotional liaisons with other men they perceived that they were defying acceptable practices. The assumptions men made was that all mainstream society condemned them for their actions, that the police would either disclose the incident or commit further acts of violence or discrimination, or that they had no avenue to seek justice. Consequently, their thoughts and actions reflected the assumptions that they had internalised; resulting in self-devaluation, feeling vulnerable and feeling rejected.

It is evident that the consequence of the attacks on these men resulted in erosion of their self-concept, dignity, and ability to function. As Gonsiorek (1988, p. 117) reported, "one of the greatest impediments to the mental health of gay and lesbian individuals is 'internalised homophobia'". This study has determined that these men experienced an invisible destruction of their self worth as they 'suffered in silence'; perceiving the bias to be a result of external and societal heterosexism. This internalised negativity and their failure to openly address the issues meant that they endured the emotional crises for a longer time frame; for many it became

a permanent part of their belief system, thus preventing them from ever resolving their inner conflicts and turmoil's.

This research has further advanced the knowledge regarding the issue of devaluation of self, identifying that the frame of reference internalised by the men regarding life practices can impact on their mental responses. The data have revealed that men made negative decisions about societal perception and were often unaware that they had even made assumptions. Because of the self-affirmation of their life assumptions, men believed that they were seeing things as they really were and were unaware that there could he other representations or rules by which others lived. As a result, many of their thoughts and actions were based on internalised rules that prevented them from seeking help because they believed that society was unaccepting of their lifestyle.

It has been possible to reach this outcome by examining the positive action some men adopted following their experience. This investigation identified that personalised assumptions affected men's thoughts and actions and that some men were not able to detach themselves from their assumptions. The data shows those participants who had reported their incident to others, who had discussed the incident with friends and family and had found support, had a stable frame of reference which included assumptions that they could find support from some area within the community. They had not defined an internalised set of rules that outlined a negative uncaring heterosexist community. In view of these men's

thoughts and actions this study has determined that human assumptions affect how survivors of bias incidents act and react following their experience and that this affects men's perception of self.

Increased vulnerability

The issue of increased vulnerability has been alluded to previously. This, and other studies, has suggested that this theme affected men at many levels. Immediately following the incident men expressed feeling vulnerable because they could be the recipients of more bias incidents. In addition to this, they felt vulnerable because they had lost control over what was happening to them. When they perceived they were constantly open to ongoing bias incidents, their adaptive resources become weakened and their coping mechanisms began to fail. Where previously they were able to find some means of dealing with their mental turmoil, therefore resisting psychological disintegration, now there was a lowering of resistance that allowed for the introduction of exaggerated and inappropriate defensive mechanisms.

The consequence of feeling vulnerable had differing affects. One was that their self-esteem was severely compromised. This research has provided evidence to support previous studies in that damage to the men's self-esteem affected their ability to take advantage of opportunities, and impaired their capacity to contribute to their community and society. Several studies have indicated that self-esteem was affected when men were exposed to any bias incident (Bard and Sangrey,

1979; Coates, Wortman, and Abbey, 1979; Hershberger and D'Augelli, 1995;

Holtzen and Agresti, 1990). What these studies suggested has been summarised

well by Mecca, Smelser and Vasconcello (1989, p. 8) when they stated that

> If individuals are members of a group in society, usually a
> minority group, that is routinely abased, thought to be inferior,
> and denied access to chances for advancement and a share of the
> good things in life, those individuals may pick up and wear the
> image that they do not count for much or deserve much.

Whilst this statement successfully summarises the first part of the theorem it does

not address the complex issue of identity development.

Defining self-esteem and reaching a conclusion as to its meaning has presented

problems for researchers in the past. Current studies have described it as an image

of self made up factors that include academic competence, social acceptance,

parental approval and appearance (Mecca, et al.,1989). It is important to assert

that each of these factors play a larger or smaller role in an individual's self-

esteem depending on the value each individual places on the various areas. The

data from this study has not identified that all of the self made up factors impacted

on the men's self-esteem, however, it has determined that social acceptance and

approval significantly impacted on them.

Developmentalists believe that self-esteem has its foundations in parental

affirmation of worth and in mastery of early developmental tasks. Its evolution

however eventually comes to depend on the values and standards of others; if we

are able to meet those standards then we are able to approve of ourselves and feel

worthwhile (Carson, et al., 1988). This study has furnished evidence that many of the men perceived that they were not able to meet the standards expected by society, family and friends, therefore, it weakened the fundamental underpinnings of who they were. From this decreased sense of self they were identified as becoming dysfunctional in coping with stressful challenges.

The impact of decreased self-esteem was broad. Firstly they perceived that the situation they found themselves in was hopeless and that they had no avenue for resolving the emotional and social conflict. Secondly, decreased self-esteem hindered their personal growth and fulfilment. Because they believed themselves to be repressed, they were not able to strive to maintain themselves as individuals, nor were they able to express themselves, or improve and grow. This further affected the way some men set their personal goals. Because their inner self was maladjusted and there was an assumption that they could not win, they tended to strive towards low or unrewarding goals. Examples of this from this research are; the man who gave up his career in the law courts, the sailor who was giving up his career in the navy and the man who settled for secretarial school rather than going to university. These men perceived that they could not win the battles they were confronted with and therefore were lesser people because of their inability to fight. Because of this they had lost focus on their life plan and in running away began drifting, with little or no sense of personal satisfaction.

Another way decreased self esteem and increased vulnerability affected some men was in the form of suicidal tendencies. This manifested in this study by expressions such as, *"suicide became the way out when things got so bad"(C)* and *"eventually I got to the stage where I became suicidal"(FF)*. Because they believed they could no longer cope with the situation and that there was no means by which they could overcome them, suicide became the only way to end their mental pain.

The issue of suicide following exposure to hate crimes has been suggested by other researches, and this investigation has provided evidence to support these suggestions (Gibson, 1989; Hershberger and D'Augelli, 1995; Hunter, 1990). Data analysis revealed that two participants contemplated suicide and one had attempted it. This researcher suggests that suicide is an extremely complex issue, involving a range of interrelated factors and issues. This investigation cannot provide an explanation for suicide, however it may indicate factors that were relevant to these men.

Research has reported that deaths from suicide in Australia have increased since the 1950's. Between 1983 an 1992 in Western Australia there were 1,512 reported male deaths which represented an average increase of 2.1% per year, with those for females representing a decrease by an average of 0.5% per year (MacDonald, 1996; Swenson, Serafinao and Thomson, 1995).

The sample interviewed in this study is too small to draw any conclusion. However, this researcher suggests that suicide represents one way of dealing with the immediate and longer term mental reactions following exposure to a bias incident. Because these men had not identified any mechanisms to cope with the turmoil they were living they perceived that the only option available to them was to end their life. It is suggested that it was not a single component that caused these men to contemplate suicide. Rather, it was a culmination of factors including fear of ongoing violence, dyscopia, internalised heterosexism, decreased self-esteem and social isolation. It has also been suggested by MacDonald (1996) and Kourany (1987) that any exposure to negative social pressures will increase men's negative responses culminating in suicidal ideations. The data gathered in this investigation supports this premise proffered by MacDonald (1996) and Kourney (1987).

Loss of control

In focusing on the mental health consequences of hate crimes, the literature has not specifically identified the issue of loss of control as being a major element. Nonetheless it has been implied by Garnet et al. (1990) that loss of control does occur when survivors perceive the need to adopt avoidance strategies following verbal harassment. Janoff-Bulman (1979, 1982) has also indicated that experiencing an incident interferes with a person's cognition of the world as a methodic and worthwhile place. Because this view is questioned, survivors are reported to respond by blaming themselves. Janoff-Bulman (1979, 1982) indicates

that this action does not have to be analysed as maladaptive. It can been described as an effective coping mechanism since it allows the survivors to discern that they are in control of their lives, which in turn enables them to adopt strategies for avoiding ongoing attacks.

The analysis of data from this research has determined that the thematic component, loss of control, had an enormous impact on men surviving a bias incident. It has provided evidence that men felt compelled to perform deeds that they knew were not normal or routine and which they did not want to do. Some men took a different route home from work each day, others refused to go out alone at night, some felt compelled to change jobs and others relocated to other towns. Whilst the completion of these actions bought a momentary reduction in tension, this was soon lost as they realised that they had lost control of their lives despite the changes. This behaviour became maladaptive for these men. Firstly it represented untenable and distorted behaviours in the face of anxiety and fear that ultimately led to the failure of men to control their future. Turner, Beisel and Nathan (1985) suggested that such behaviours advance feelings of insecurity and inadequacy, guilt and high vulnerability regarding ongoing intimidation. This study has demonstrated that not only did participants exhibit immediate and longer term mental reactions, but that those reaction where also reflected by distorted behaviours.

An additional explanation for loss of control being identified as maladaptive is that it prevented participants from becoming active community members. Identifying that society had let them down by allowing perpetrators to go unpunished, and that they were required to hide the experience from others for fear of disclosure, meant that the men's behaviours were interfering with their effectiveness and ability to meet personal needs. They were not able to openly express their sexual feelings for other men, nor could they express their emotions to others for fear of more people learning of the incident. As a result, these men perceived that they lacked control over their lives and were unable to attain personal and social milestones.

The impact of losing control of their lives caused men to adopt mental responses such as debased self-image, anger, confusion and devaluation of self. This produced a personal solitude that affected these homosexually active men's functioning as individuals within society. The longer term effects were that they perceived the need to adopt behaviours by which 'main stream society' would view them as normal heterosexual community members. The false life practices that were adopted then act to constantly remind the men that they were not living the full life they could or would have liked to. The impact of this was that they continued to view themselves as lesser individuals. They perceived the need to continually deny their true selves and that they were not in control of their lives. The impact of this response was that some failed to achieve their potential in their working life due to the constant need to hide their true selves for fear that

identification would lead to further bias incidents. Others experienced such inner

conflict that they had problems functioning as social or sexually beings.

Internalised heterosexism

There is an increasing amount of literature that examines the issue of internalised

heterosexism and how it impacts on survivors of bias incidents (D'Augelli, 1992;

Bhugra, 1987; Gonsiorek, 1988; Herek, 1984; Mason, 1995; Sears, 1991; Van de

Ven, 1994). The conclusions reached by these studies is that men internalised

heterosexist beliefs and therefore developed an increased sense of vulnerability,

that they blamed themselves for what has happened to them, and that they felt

helpless and often confused. This research provides qualitative evidence to

support other studies in that it has also identified that these men experienced the

same mental responses.

A phenomenon determined from this study is that the need to lie and change life

patterns so as to enable them to move in the heterosexual community safely incited

men to carry out behaviours that they perceived as atypical. This constraint

produced maladaptive reactions for the men forced to make them. This

phenomenon has been suggested in other studies, describing that people who were

forced to perform roles in which the behaviours were irregular, subsequently

develop feelings of guilt, vulnerability and decreased self-esteem (Horowitz and

Solomon, 1978; Strayer and Ellenhorn, 1975). The fact that internalised

heterosexism forced these men to adopt irregular patterns so as to avoid ongoing victimisation fostered ongoing problematic social roles.

Internalised heterosexism impacted very strongly on these homosexually active men. With an increased sense of vulnerability and a loss of control, this investigation identified that the survivors became vulnerable to social perceptions of homosexuality. Participants perceived that society neither legislates against nor supports legislation to protect them, implying that its members supported negative attitudes towards all homosexually active men. Consequently, the dominant views extolling the evils of homosexual lifestyles continue to impact on them. They perceive society as being hostile towards them, therefore they need to constantly be on their guard regarding disclosure of their sexual orientation. The constant exposure to social situations that triggered the anger in these men culminated in an upset equilibrium, resulting in self-doubt. Because of this self doubt they physically and emotionally withdrew from society. In addition to the mental turmoil, this internalisation of heterosexist attitudes further debased their self-image and self worth as human beings.

Resulting Behaviours

The immediate mental reactions and the longer term mental impact, coupled with their possible implications, resulted in men being unable to perform effectively when attending to their daily functions of life. Men spoke of their need to change career paths, of being unable to work and of having to dramatically change life

practices. These actions not only directly affected the men but indirectly affected society also. Having to relocate, form new relationships, develop a new network of acquaintances reinforces the anger and frustration felt from surviving the initial incident. This secondary victimisation raised a plethora of mental responses that rendered them unable to cope with the most routine of matters. This section will address the themes identified. These include hiding the issues, changing patterns, dyscopia and failure to report.

Hiding the issues

It has been identified from the data that a number of outcomes have risen following the exposure to a bias incident. Included here are a negative self-image, feelings of inadequacy, isolation and decreased self-esteem. Failing to work through these mental reactions tended to manifest a lack of responsibility and a decided tendency towards deceitfulness. There are two plausible ways of looking at this action.

The first is that some men are responding to environmental stresses. They firmly believe that society has condemned them for their actions and therefore they have no alternative but to hide the truth. This was seen as the only available option that ensured they did not have to suffer ongoing exposure to bias. The outcome for the men who embraced this alternative was that they rationalised their actions as the only choice and therefore overlooked any possibility that sections of the community were understanding and accepting of their lifestyle. Their failure to

face their learned assumptions prevented them from coming to terms with all the issues. The data reflect that the men have hidden the facts from what they perceived to be an uncaring, aggressive community.

The second way of viewing this action is that men have embraced one of the most primitive mechanisms for dealing with a fearful incident, that of denial. The implication is that men attempted to screen out the reality of the event by hiding the truth behind a fictional story. By denying the truth of what had happened, and failing to confront the traumatic situation, they were not forced to deal with the many personal problems that were also created (Gleser and Sacks, 1973).

The data have identified that the men have not adopted this action. Gleser and Sacks (1973) state that the denial approach is a coping strategy used by individuals when confronted with problems of trauma. This study has determined that men hide the truth behind a fictional story, therefore avoiding confrontation of the traumatic situation at all. The data have not identified, however, that the men were screening out reality nor were they denying the truth. Whilst they were denying the truth to those around them, they were not denying the truth to themselves, nor had they screened out reality. All men had a firm understanding of the reality of the event, however most had not addressed the issue in a positive way.

Feelings of hopelessness and frustration were further exacerbated when men perceiving the need to adopt negative coping mechanisms as a means of survival.

These feelings included hiding the issues or living two lives: the heterosexual man who meets society's expectations of what is 'male', and the homosexual man who needs to hide his lifestyle from those who may cause physical or mental harm. This form of self censoring, of having to constantly maintain a facade caused many stresses for men including powerlessness, loss of control and hopelessness. These are stresses that are associated with a fear that they may let down their guard and be exposed and thus further violated in some way.

Changing patterns

The data have shown that men adopted many behavioural patterns to protect themselves from ongoing attacks of bias. One such behaviour that the literature has suggested is that men adopt the function of changing what were routine behaviours (Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995). This avoidance practice can be effective in the short term, as the men are able to remove themselves from the fears, however in the longer term this strategy was ineffective.

The data have determined that men are hypersensitive to rejection by friends, employers or family and apprehensive of any sign of social ridicule. Because of this they adopted behaviours whereby they hide the facts or made major changes so as to avoid ongoing exposure. This maladjusted behaviour resulted in men failing to achieve goals, leading to despondence because of their failure to succeed. The men's descriptions have revealed that the impact of these actions meant they were unable to relate comfortably with others because they feared

exposure of the facts, rejection, or more exposure to a bias incident. The result of this was that it caused immense distress and a decreased self-esteem.

Dyscopia

The power of reactions such as internalised heterosexism, loss of control, anger, and fear of ongoing exposure not only affected participants' physical and mental wellbeing, but also on their ability to cope with activities of daily living. The reactions affected them so much they believed they needed to take added precautions such as not venturing outside after dark so as to avoid further exposure, driving different routes home every night, and not leaving nightclubs alone. They were constantly aware of possible exposure to incidents when moving about their own community, or of not being able to seek physical contact with other men for fear of physical or mental abuse.

For these homosexually active men confronted with exposure to a bias incident they encountered two challenges that they needed to overcome in order to function on a daily basis. The first was to embrace mechanisms that enabled them to recognise and manage their stresses, and the second was to protect themselves from emotional damage and disorderliness. The findings from this study have determined that the mental reactions experienced have forestalled men from realising mechanisms that enabled them to adopt behaviours that would help them address the stress. It has been previously discussed that men experienced anger, fear and oppressive dogma along with a loss of control over events and increased

vulnerability. These stresses have prevented men from objectively appraising the situation and then working out alternative solutions. Additionally, men have failed at determining appropriate courses of action in striving to achieve an effective change. Because they have not discovered any mechanism by which they have been able to make positive changes in themselves or their surroundings, they became dyscopic when attending to daily routines.

The depth of this phenomenological examination has identified that the participants were not able to focus on behavioural practices to assist them in dealing with their stresses. Instead they have been identified as taking a defensive approach in order to cope. This approach has focused on protecting themselves from hurt and disorganisation rather than resolving the situation.

The findings have already determined that these men experienced mental reactions that blocked or inhibited their action, leading to a failure to cope. This phenomenon is further examined with closer scrutiny being placed on issues related to men's learning of maladaptive mechanism. This investigation identified that rather than learning skills and building attitudes needed for coping with every day life, men embraced dyscopic patterns. The data identified how men expressed feelings of inadequacy and insecurity when moving about in a community they perceived as being hostile. Because of the decreased community support the men expressed a lack of commitment in trying to rationalise their behaviour and actions. Instead, they favored a defensive and avoidant life-style as it ensured a

less threatening outcome. The result of this approach was that it did not aid them in overcoming their anxieties nor did it assist them in developing coping mechanisms. Instead they felt trapped, isolated, and alienated.

Failure to report

The number of incidents reported to employers, allied health workers and police is very low compared to the total number of incidents recorded in this study. Of the eighteen reported incidents, three were received well by police, two were received well by counsellors and all seven relayed to friends and organisations were received well[1]. What was of most concern was the 28 incidents that went unreported to anyone. It was this hidden element that was having a physical and mental impact on these men and allowing perpetrators to continue their lives unpunished.

Survivors participating in this study reported that they expected police would be judgmental regarding sexual orientation and that they would not get a fair and equal hearing. As one participant narrated,

> "if I had been a straight woman that had been
> attacked in a toilet by some nutcase...you know,
> there would have been a manned full scale hunt for
> him. But because I am gay, I don't think you have
> the same rights...."(Y)

It was these perceptions and beliefs, the distrust, the feelings of inferiority as a member of society that prevented men from coming forward and reporting the

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[1] Whereas a few reported incidents were received well, some men did identify that reporting to police and counsellors received negative responses.

crimes against them. Whether this was justified or not, this was the essence of what the men believed and therefore important, and in need of further attention. These findings provide evidence to support others studies (Baird, et al., 1994; Berk, Boyd and Hamner, 1992; Berrill and Herek, 1990; Comstock, 1989; Cox, 1994; Le Blanc, 1991; Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995), that men are failing to report many of the incidences they are experiencing.

Whilst homosexually active men and the gay community are reportedly aware of the rise in bias incidents, there is a decrease in the number of incidents being officially reported to police (Cox, 1994; GLAD, 1994). This means that the police who are only able to act upon reports of violence are unaware of the frequency and seriousness of this issue and are unable to form a response and act upon complaints.

Besides the police, there are other organisations to whom these incidents might be reported. Other actions taken post-incident involve the reporting to organisations. An additional problem identified for the men involved in this research was that they reported the services available to be inappropriate. Those who do not identify as gay felt uncomfortable speaking to the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service as they did not identify as a gay man. Others felt it not appropriate to contact the AIDS Council 'hard to reach line' as they did not have issues concerning HIV/AIDS to discuss. The lack of police services for gay men and lesbians also made it difficult to contact officers when requiring assistance on reporting

incidents. Adding to the difficulties in contacting these agencies was the limitation in free access (1800 phone numbers) for country men. This exacerbated the feelings of isolation and confusion.

When reporting to counsellors, the concern voiced by participants was that support personnel were not familiar with the issues involving homosexually active men, their lifestyle, their turmoil and their concerns. Because of this, it was perceived that the issue would be trivialised and not resolved at all. The lack of specialised training of allied health workers fails to prepare them to address the specific needs of this population.

Of the 18 reported incidents, only five were reported to friends. Logic would assume that individuals would have a close relationship with at least one other with whom they could share a negative experience. What was identified, however, was that men felt shame at seeking sexual contact at beats and so were uncomfortable about talking to others for fear of being condemned or judged negatively. As a result they shut in these feelings. This reinforced internalised heterosexist attitudes and resulted in self-condemnation and self hate of their lifestyle.

One of the strongest reasons for not wishing to report any form of bias incident was the fear of disclosure of lifestyle. The turmoil associated with the disclosure of the incident created a tremendous dilemma for the men. Their fear of exposure

to significant others if they did disclose raised the question as to whether they should disclose or not. This study has provided the evidence that highlights that these men, having survived the incident, are under immense stress. Furthermore, it has determined that nondisclosure does not eliminate that stress; but then, given the current climate as perceived by these men, would they question whether disclosure would eliminate the stress or add to it.

If successful prosecutions are to be achieved to deter others, survivors must be encouraged to report incidents to the appropriate authorities. There is a general consensus among the experts in the field that incidents are not reported to authorities (Baird, et al., 1994; Berk, Boyd and Hamner, 1992; Berrill and Herek, 1990; Comstock, 1989; Cox, 1994; Le Blanc, 1991; Sandroussi and Thompson, 1995). This investigation has identified that the main issue regarding reluctance to report incidents to police is a lack of trust and an expectation of no support. For many of these men this distrust of police has developed over time and does not stem from personal experiences, but from a belief that the police will be aggressive in their responses. This attitude towards police has amplified over the years because of repeated reports of police violence and harassment towards gay men and lesbians. All but three participants reported a negative perception of police responses to bias incidents, citing reasons such as *"these bastards keep files....and if you have a label on your file, that's it, you're done" (AA)* and *"I reckon that they are worse than the bashers"(F).*

It has been previously highlighted that one of the major criticisms of previous studies is that they have not addressed issues regarding the impact of not reporting. This investigation has gone some way towards addressing this. For the participants in this study, not wanting to report, or perceiving they have no avenue in which they could report, has highlighted the insecurities already being experienced. Feeling vulnerable because of the incident, believing they are losing control of their lives, fear of exposure and feeling angry, these men internalise these responses and adopt the assumption that there is no one or no where to report their experiences. This has three outcomes. Firstly men fail to identify mechanisms by which they can address their internal conflict. This results in the failure to fully address their internal conflicts, therefore, men are constantly reminded of the experience and its consequences and are unable to work towards resolving their disharmony. Secondly, men are failing to recognise personal and professional goals, therefore are enslaved by their inner frustrations and beliefs that they have failed in life. Finally, failure to report affects the greater community, as authorities are unable to identify the extent of the problem and create management strategies to address them.

Conclusion

The discussion on the findings has determined that the impact of experiencing any bias incidents is immense for the participants in this study. These homosexually active men have experienced many physical and mental upheavals that in turn have created inner conflicts and social devastation. They perceive themselves as

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social deviants, unable to change circumstances without resorting to deception. Their fear of exposure to further negative reactions, because of their sexual orientation, leads to a loss of impetus to continue their lives within the general community. Believing that there is a need to run from the issues creates an isolation that revives the turmoil initially experienced. Because of this, many of these men do not utilise coping mechanisms available to them to break the cycle. This problem of breaking the cycle is further enhanced by the perceived lack of services available to them if they choose to address the issue directly. The belief that police, social services and other organisations are not focused on dealing with the issues surrounding bias incidents prevents these men from accessing them. The consequence of surviving a bias incident had a strong impact on these men and resulted in an increase in psychosocial quandaries associated with living as a homosexually active man.

Chapter Eleven

Reflection on the Findings

Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore essential aspects of the experience of surviving violence, harassment, discrimination or persecution against homosexually active men. This chapter will offer a reflection on the findings, focusing on how this has extended knowledge with regard to the lived experience of homosexually active men who have survived bias incidents.

Prior to the present investigation, there had been few qualitative studies documenting bias incidents perpetrated against homosexually active men and their mental responses. This research has gone some way towards achieving a qualitative study by documenting violence, harassment, discrimination and persecution of survivors of sexually oriented bias incidents and the issues that have surfaced following exposure to an incident.

There were a number of problems with the study that emerged from this investigation. Whilst the number of men participating in the study was sufficient for this methodology, the recording of more life stories could have been beneficial. Additionally, this investigation is not representative of all homosexually active

men due to the low number of men who did not identify as gay or homosexual. It is, however, a collection of expressive and valuable data that has allowed for a description of issues and events relevant to these participants. Furthermore, it has extended the knowledge with regard to the immediate and longer term mental responses and resulting behaviours experienced by these homosexually active men.

When examining bias incidents perpetrated against these men it is evident that there are many complex issues. Published and unpublished studies on hate crimes and bias incidents suggests that incidents of violence, harassment, persecution and discrimination are being perpetrated against these men. Whether the problems are increasing or not, the major concerns are that there are a number of men who have experienced, and who are experiencing such incidences, and this is having a profound impact on them physically, mentally and socially.

Where previously there had been no research into bias incidents in Western Australia, this study has now gone some way towards rectifying this. More importantly, it has documented the lived experiences of these twenty-nine men and described how they have been physically and mentally buffeted by differing incidents of violence, harassment, discrimination and persecution. In describing these events it has been identified that they have not just experienced single incidents of bias in their lives. Many of the twenty-nine participants have been exposed to multiple incidents.

Thomas Cowan once wrote that

> The ability to enrich the world is exceptional by nature.
> Homosexuality is exceptional by nature.... Courage is also
> an exceptional trait, possibly because the situations that
> require it are, for most people, rare. Nevertheless, for many
> gay men and women...courage is a recurring necessity, if
> not a fact of daily life.... To grow up gay or lesbian in
> modern times means to grow up an outsider. The gay child
> finds he or she is out of step with the values and standards of
> a predominantly heterosexual society (1989, p. 1)

Cowan's statement identifies the need for gay men to have courage when growing up in a predominantly heterosexual society, to have courage to move forward and forge out a meaningful life for themselves. For some, however, this courage is stripped from them because of bias incidents - bias incidents that force them to withdraw emotionally from the community to which they belong, preventing them from becoming productive members of society.

In reflecting on the findings of this study, it has been determined that the courage required to live as a homosexually active man is being stripped away by internalised heterosexist beliefs, secondary victimisation, social isolation, loss of control, changing behaviours, fear, anger, and oppressive dogma. Importantly, this investigation has identified that whilst there are central themes identified, these themes also contain important components that together have a large impact on the men experiencing them. The impact of this on these men and on the

society they live in is immense as it prevents us all from uniting as a cohesive body working towards a common productive social structure.

The immediate mental reactions and the longer term mental impact endured by these men so greatly affects their life practices that they are forced to make dramatic changes in life patterns so as to avoid further possible exposure to bias incidents. The result of these dramatic changes - inability to go to work, changing jobs, moving towns, frightened to go out after dark - creates a personal conflict where many men perceived a loss of control of their own lives.

The consequence of this mental turmoil is very serious. Not only are these participants accepting that bias incidents are to be a part of their daily lives, they are allowing society to ignore the issues and not admit that there is a significant social problem at hand.

This inner conflict and turmoil not only affects how they function within society, but also how they interact with others. Continually fearing that disclosure of the actions that led to the bias incident, or disclosure of the incident itself would amount to rejection by family and peers, these men are choosing to keep all their responses to themselves. This secondary victimisation escalates, and the survivors perceive they are personally isolated, social deviants and alone.

Living with these stresses results in survivors experiencing more immediate and

longer term mental reactions, and perpetuates a cycle of continuing impact (Figure

13).
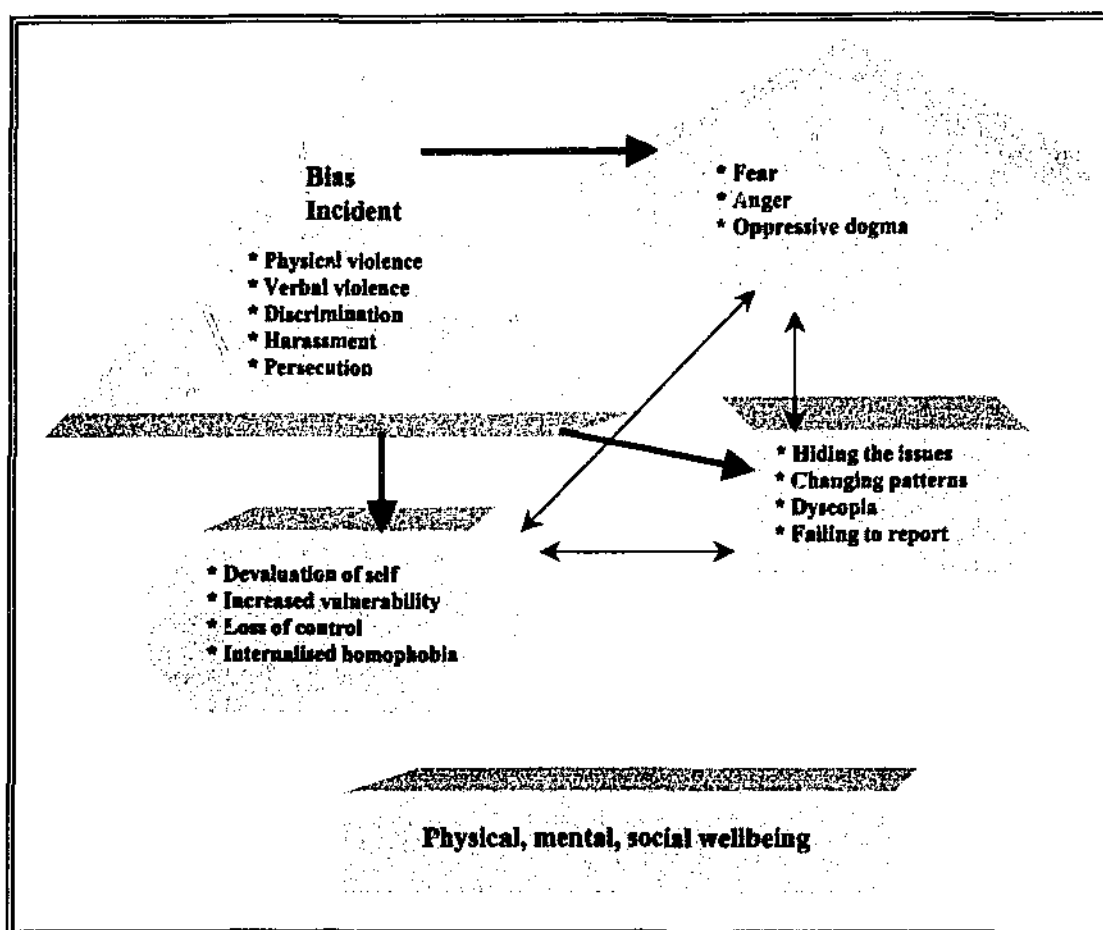
Figure 13. Cycle of continuous impact

This further affects the individual, and society, as it continues to go unaddressed.

The consequence is that it appears to become a 'non issue', something towards

which everyone turns a blind eye. Whilst it has been identified that not all men

experience every aspect of this cycle of continuous impact, these are the issues that

present for some men. For others, they may experience only aspects of it. The

feelings of frustration and social isolation were enhanced by the lack of social and community support networks, particularly for the homosexually active men living in country areas. Not only did they report experiencing self-doubt with regard to their involvement of a greater social structure, but also they were experiencing a personal sense of isolation with no avenue of escape.

Men discussed the isolation that resulted from having no one with whom to discuss issues. This increasing self doubt and isolation led to heightened internalised heterosexist beliefs. The change in lifestyle patterns, the isolation from other homosexually active men and the constant reminder of heterosexism within society increased their internal beliefs that homosexuality is wrong, and therefore, they must be deviant in some way.

Trapped by heterosexist assumptions of homosexuality, many of these men failed to actualise their life ambitions or dreams. The effect of this never-ending cycle is that survivors become caught in their own negative perceptions of themselves as individuals and as purposeful members of society. With no visible means of breaking from the cycle these men fail to recognise coping mechanisms which they could adopt to break the cycle and move towards a mental, physical and social wellbeing.

In addition to this type of secondary victimisation, the men reported a powerlessness to resolve their inner conflicts. They perceived that society could not, or would not help, because their sexual orientation was a deviant behaviour. They believed they had no avenue to seek the knowledge they required to learn coping mechanisms when dealing with their own conflicts. Consequently, these men internalised society's heterosexist attitudes and failed to address or resolve the immediate mental reactions or the longer term impact. The consequence of men perceiving they could turn to no one for help was that no one learnt of their experiences. As a result, many types of bias incidents have gone unreported and therefore unresolved.

Most men who survive any form of bias are failing to take any action post incident. This means that the police are unaware of the frequency and seriousness of these incidents and are unable to form a response and act upon complaints.

Many men in this study who did report their experience to an allied health worker discussed how they were not helped appropriately. When confronted with issues regarding bias incidents, allied health workers were reported to lack knowledge and resources regarding their specific needs. Knowledge of the conflicts and crises that are being lived is imperative if counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers are to guide men through these turmoils. It is not only important to realise the stresses and conflicts being lived, but also to be aware of issues such as

internalised heterosexism and secondary victimisation which may be manifesting and disrupting the internal equilibrium of these men. It is the culmination of this conflict that causes mental upheavals, isolation, and a decreased, unproductive lifestyle for the men.

Importantly, many of the perceptions that services are unable to help, or that they are unwilling to help are based on pure conjecture by these men. Not all men had personal negative experiences to discuss when reporting bias incidents. They did, however, discuss anecdotal evidence or hearsay from other sources denigrating official reporting channels. It is this historical and anecdotal evidence which is now impacting on these men and making it difficult for these men to overcome their own inner turmoil and reach out for help and support.

Summary

In this phenomenological study the author asked 29 homosexually active men to describe the lived experience of surviving a bias incident. He recorded, transcribed, analysed and reported the issues that have been identified.

This study has successfully added to the qualitative data of hate crimes. It has applied a phenomenological methodology and focused on the individual's lived experiences, confirming what other studies have implied; that bias incidents perpetrated against homosexually active men continue to happen and are having a

tremendous psychological and sociological impact on them. It has also presented a cycle of continuous impact, documenting many of the issues experienced by men at different times, leading to personal solitude and a devaluation of self. For many men, this has prevented them from moving forward in life and living as a strong active community member.

The findings have identified that the impact of experiencing any bias incident is immense for the participants in this study. These men have experienced many physical and mental upheavals that in turn have created inner conflicts and social devastation. They perceive themselves as social deviants, unable to change circumstances without resorting to deception. Their fear of exposure to further negative reactions, because of their sexual orientation, leads to a loss of impetus to continue their lives within the general community. Believing that there is a need to run from the issues creates an isolation that revives the turmoils initially experienced. Because of this, many of these men do not utilise coping mechanisms available to them to break the cycle. This problem of breaking the cycle is further enhanced by the perceived lack of services available to them if they choose to address the issue directly. The belief that police, social services and other organisations are not focused on dealing with the issues surrounding bias incidents prevents these men from accessing them.

What these men are being exposed to is alarming and the issues that arise are immense. No person should ever have to live like this. We all have the right to be safe all of the time and with further research and positive action perhaps this can be achieved for everyone.

Issues that did not emerge from the study

There were issues that one might have expected to be forthcoming from the data that were not identified at all, or were not significant in the lives of these homosexually active men.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS has been identified as affecting the coming out process and as exacerbating difficulties experienced in dealing with issues of being a homosexually active man (Boxer and Cohler, 1989; Edwards, 1992; Feldman, 1989; Herdt, 1989; Parker and Carballo, 1990; Plummer, 1989). However, this study did not identify HIV/AIDS in any portion of the data analysis.

This study does not therefore concur with previous investigations. A possible explanation for this was that the research focused its questioning on the lived experience of surviving the bias incident. It did not place any foci on sexual practices. It cannot, therefore, be concluded that men were not concerned with

HIV/AIDS issues, as this study did not pursue a line of questioning that addressed the subject.

Interestingly, AIDS related homophobia was also not identified as being an issue for these men. This may be a limitation of the study in that the researcher may not have delved deep enough when participants indicated that they perceived the incident was related to their sexual orientation when perpetrators stated that they were told that "you lot deserve what you get". These types of statements were interpreted as pertaining to the survivors sexual orientation and not that they were perceived as having HIV.

Legal issues

The United Nations Human Rights Committee findings and the implications for anti-gay laws in Western Australia (1994) states that the legal age of consent for homosexually active adults is 21 years. The report highlighted that there is a five year difference between the age of consent between sexually active heterosexuals and homosexuals. Homosexually active men between the ages of 16 and 21 are therefore deemed to be criminals and can be jailed for three years.

The issue of legal age was not a major issue for the men in this investigation. One explanation for this may have been that the age of men participating in the study were over 21 years of age. Because the behavioural practices of these men were in

accordance with the law they did not identify that the age of consent issue was important to them.

Masculinity

Buchbinder (1993) suggests that the issue haunting men of our culture is the fear that they may not be manly enough. He states that man learns at an early age that to be a man he must successfully compete against other men; that he operates under the assumption that he must succeed where others fail, professionally, personally and sexually. For homosexually active men, therefore, it is assumed that they attempt to conceal or suppress elements that may betray them as insufficiently manly.

The findings have not identified masculinity as a central issue. Men were not found to identify issues where they perceived that they were not manly. Whilst they were undergoing mental responses related to their experience, they did not discuss issues that related to their masculinity. The data does not indicate that these men believed that they were less masculine because of the exposure to the bias incident. The explanation for this perhaps lies in the fact that they were focused on discussing the incident and the mental responses and the issue of their masculinity did not arise. Alternatively, it may not have been a relevant issue for these men and therefore one that needed no further explanation. This issue

requires further examination as to its impact for men when exposed to any form of bias incident.

Reflection on the research approach

The question was raised previously as to why the number of respondents was small. On reflection this is a difficult question to address. One key point may be that this study's data collection period was too short. Compared to other studies (Cox, 1994; GLAD, 1994) which focused their collection period over a much longer time frame, the fourteen day collection period may not have allowed homosexually active men to gather their thoughts before telephoning the freecall number. Furthermore, some men may still be trapped in their inner conflict regarding the incident and not feel that they are able to discuss the issues with anyone. The thought of opening old wounds may still be too painful.

For other men there may be a reluctance to discuss any issues with a stranger because of their stage of 'coming out'. The six stages of coming out suggested by Cass (1979) indicates that some men may be at a stage where they are not ready to discuss any issues at all.

1. Identity confusion (who am I?)

2. Identity comparison (maybe I am gay)

3. Identity tolerance (I probably am gay)

4. Identity acceptance (I am gay, and that is normal)

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5. Identity pride (I am proud of being gay, and I resent that individuals and society discriminate against gays)

6. Identity synthesis (I am committed to the gay community and recognise that some heterosexuals are supportive)

For those men who may be at stage one and not yet comfortable with who they are, to contact a research study and openly and honestly discuss issues about their sexual orientation and practices may be too confronting, therefore, they may be reluctant to participate.

Previous chapters also identified that the age group of participants was focused in the 31 to 50 years bracket. This could also be a reflection on the stages of 'coming out' previously discussed. Those under the age of 30 may still be addressing their personal stance on their sexual orientation. Furthermore, as previously discussed, the issue of diminished legislative support may have prevented some men from participating in the study. But what of the men over 50 years of age? These men are not restricted by the age of consent legislation. The supposition can be that this group of men maintains a lower profile in the community and are therefore not predisposed to experiencing bias incidents. Perhaps they have developed good coping mechanisms or good networks to assist them in dealing with issues that may arise for them.

The final component of this research that requires some comment is the issue surrounding the low number of men who did not identify as gay. Of those who contacted this researcher, four identified as bisexual and one as heterosexual. The need for research to allow more men who do not identify with the gay community to participate is important if conclusive data is to be reported on all the issues around bias incidents. This complex area needs further attention so these men can be reached and their stories told. One of the key findings of this and other studies is that men fear exposure. Maybe these men perceived that they have too much to lose if they disclose their experiences to anyone. Perhaps with ongoing research and with an established reporting body that can be trusted by men, these men will feel confident and comfortable about coming forward and sharing their experiences.

Chapter Twelve

Implications, Issues and Recommendations

Introduction

This research has highlighted two areas of concerns that need to be addressed.

The first is that bias incidents being perpetrated against homosexually active men

are having a marked physical, mental, and sociological impact on the men. The

second area of concern is that these events are not being reported, making it

impossible for the appropriate bodies to address them.

Major issue to be addressed

This phenomenological research has advanced the knowledge regarding the impact

bias incidents are having on homosexually active men. It has not only highlighted

how the incidents have threatened the well-being of the men and prevented them

from embracing any mechanism from which they can adopt a resolution, but it

also demonstrated how it has prevented them from doing anything about it. In

summarising the impact of surviving an incident, this study has identified that men

have been affected on an emotional, interpersonal and sociological level.

In coping with the reactions, participants have been confronted with two

challenges. The first is to develop coping strategies to address the inner turmoil

being experienced and the second is to protect themselves from ongoing emotional and physical damage. The important outcome from this research is that men did not feel competent to handle the emotional responses they were experiencing. They were unable to objectively appraise the situation, work out alternative solutions, decide on an appropriate course of action then take that action and evaluate it.

This study has determined that men adopted a defensive approach when dealing with their inner and physical conflict. The primary aim of this approach was that they focused totally on protecting themselves from hurt: physical and emotional. The outcome is that men have focused their attentions on maintaining the integrity of the self, regardless of how dyscopic and self-defeating this may prove to be in the long run. Consequently, they have a decreased efficiency when meeting personal and professional goals. Finally they have perceived a narrow perceptual field and an inflexibility to view the situation objectively and therefore identify alternative approaches available to them.

The impact of living with their inner turmoil resulted in these homosexually active men becoming dysfunctional when moving within the gay community as well as within the general community. The remainder of this chapter will therefore outline the major issues that need to be addressed.

Immediate support

Participants in the study identified that they had no where to go for support. Those men who did not identify as homosexual or gay did not believe that they could contact the Gay and Lesbian Counseling Service, as they did not identify with the community. Others stated that they were not comfortable contacting the AIDS Counsel 'hard to reach line' as they did not have an issue regarding HIV or AIDS.

For men to be able to address the effect of living through a bias incident they need to be able to contact a group or organisation that caters for their specific needs. The contact point would be required to;

- Have a full understanding of the emotional turmoil being experienced
- Have facilities and resources to support the men through their emotional crises
- Have staff/volunteers able to support men with reporting to appropriate authorities or in finding appropriate accommodation.

Community education

The physical and emotional pain of living through a bias incident has influenced the way these men interact with the world around them. This ultimately has affected their functioning in day to day social exchanges as well as their work environment.

This and other studies have identified that violence and harassment against homosexually active men is perpetrated in public arenas, public parks, outside gay venues, and in highly populated gay areas. There is an urgency, therefore, to examine the need for community education programs which would address the impact such attacks have on the individual, and indirectly on the community at large. In addition to addressing the impact, these education programs need to focus on change management. These programs need to seek mechanisms to help the community to become empowered to adopt attitudes and processes that will assist them in overcoming bias within their community.

The implementation of change management programs must first identify what it is that prevents change and then work towards overcoming those obstacles. This study and earlier studies have identified that difficulties have arisen from;

- Lack of high-level commitment and support

- Unclear vision of what needs to be achieved

- Inconsistent communication

- Failure to recognise cultural impact

- Inadequate education

- Lack of effective management of the issues

In order for any educational program to be successful it must contain a number of vital elements. These include;

- Open and effective communication with all relevant parties

- Assessment of the organisation's readiness to address the issues front on

- Knowledge of the vulnerabilities and strengths of groups and individuals

- Building of ownership and accountability where it belongs

- Establishing two-way consultation, involvement and feedback processes

- Providing thorough training and support

- Ongoing evaluation and review of individual and community needs.

For this to be effective, religious, community, Federal and State political leaders must portray a loud and clear message that bias incidents of any kind against any group are intolerable. These groups need to be seen as champions for the cause. They must display excellent communication skills while constantly seeking comment and guidance from relevant representatives across the whole community.

Official monitoring of sexually oriented bias incidents

The 1983 United States of America Commission on Civil Rights called on Federal and State authorities;

...to develop workable reporting systems that will produce
an accurate and comprehensive measure of the extent of
criminal activity that is clearly based on racial and/or
religious motivations....Such data are needed to measure
trends, develop preventative programs, allocate resources
and adjust public policy (Anti-Gay Violence, 1987, p. 56).

The issue of monitoring bias incidents against homosexually active men is one

that also needs examining. If authorities are to identify that a problem exists, and

make moves to address it, then first a needs analysis must be done. What is

needed, therefore, is comprehensive, ongoing studies which will constantly

monitor the incidents and the impact those incidents are having on these men.

Importantly, police must also assure total confidentiality if individuals are to be

encouraged to disclose issues of sexual orientation. For this to be a reality,

however, it must first be preceded by legislation that identifies acts as being

unlawful. For law enforcement officers to document incidents on a register there

needs to be clear legislation outlining unlawful incidents.

Improved police gay and lesbian community relations

Because of the perceived negative perceptions of the homosexually active men

taking part in this study regarding police attitudes, behaviours, and practices when

addressing bias incidents, reporting of incidents appears not to be happening.

What the men have identified is that to disclose involves personal risk, for

disclosure without discretion can leave one unprotected and highly vulnerable.

Unless an improved relationship with authorities and agencies can be achieved,

this negative response of reporting will continue to be seen as not serving victim's best interests, leading to harm, betrayal and further isolation.

Many police departments appear to have not fully committed to this issue; either by failing to appoint gay and lesbian liaison officers, or by not offering any formal training on the special needs and requirements of the community they are liaising with. In addressing police/gay relations, overseas and Australian studies have realised the advantages of improved communications and mutual respect and have made serious efforts to improve alliances. The result of this action is that complaints of police abuse have declined and there has been a greater cooperation between the gay and lesbian community and police (Anti-Gay Violence, 1987).

It is therefore recommended that further action is required in the following areas;

- Assessing the need for a trained gay and lesbian liaison officer at police stations (particularly those stations that serve areas where increased incidents are occurring).

- Identifying the need for the development of model procedures, programs, and policies to assist officers in handling complaints of bias incidents.

- Examining whether the development of policies and education on interviewing procedures for survivors of bias incidents would improve police and community relations.

- Examining whether the deployment of additional police resources in areas where incidents are concentrated decreases bias incidents against homosexually active men.

- Examining the need for police initiated ongoing public relations programs aimed at improving relations between police and homosexually active men, encouraging them to report incidents.

<u>Ongoing research</u>

Australian and international writing has increased the awareness of the issues related to bias incidents, however, there continues to be a deficit in qualitative research into the experiences of homosexually active men. To overcome this deficit in knowledge there is a need for further qualitative research into the consequences of bias incidents perpetrated against homosexually active men in all Australian States and overseas. Furthermore, there is a need for organisations and researchers to collaborate their findings so a national body of knowledge can be created, thus allowing for the development of policies and procedures to address the issues more effectively. Additional research coupled with this and other qualitative studies can then form the basis for the development, and implementation of legislation, policies and community programs.

Further investigation needs to be undertaken to answer the following questions.

- What coping mechanisms are required to assist men in working through the emotional turmoil being experienced following exposure to a bias incident?

- How do the longer term mental reaction of homosexually active men following a bias incident impact on the general community?

- How does the treatment of homosexually active men by law enforcement agencies, the justice system and service agencies compare with services available to heterosexual men?

- What do health workers, law enforcement agencies and social services need to know so they can offer support to homosexually active men who have survived a bias incident?

- What agencies are best suited to offer support to homosexually active men who have experienced any bias incident?

For all research studies to be beneficial they must strive to reach as many homosexually active men as possible. As other studies have highlighted that this is a difficult task, as it requires the researcher to go beyond the data collection method of accessing men at gay venues and gay events. This is very difficult but with ongoing development of data collection techniques for accessing all homosexually active men it is in the realms of possibility. This study has made steps towards achieving this. By recruiting the support of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, this research was reported on a television documentary

during prime television viewing time and broadcast to the whole of the State. It was also promoted by multiple live and recorded radio interviews broadcast throughout the State of Western Australia. In addition to this, newspaper advertisements were placed in local community and state papers as well as gay publications.

Social services for homosexually active men who have experienced bias incidents. Importantly, it should be realised that not all issues demand the attention of police. The men who reported to this study are experiencing physical and mental turmoil because of bias incidents, and like other citizens deserve the support and compassion of agencies. These agencies include, hospitals, crisis centres, youth support centres, police, allied health workers, mental health workers, refuge centres for men and government agencies.

This investigation has highlighted that these services need to be more accessible to all men, not just those in metropolitan areas. The country men participating in this study identified that they are being confronted by many of the same bias incidents in their communities and because of the social structure of their environment are in need of appropriate practical support to address their specific needs.

For this to be achieved, however, Federal and State governments would need to commit financial support to assist in the running of the agencies and to promote

training programs to educate staff in ways to respond sensitively to homosexually active men.

To achieve this, questions for further research include:

- What programs are required to meet the needs of homosexually active men surviving bias incidents?

- How can publicity programs for services available to regional and metropolitan homosexually active men be made available?

- How can all community services be collaborated so as to meet the needs of the community?

Recommendations

The recommendations of this researcher are that researchers and policy writers need to commit to further examination of all the issues highlighted in this study. Importantly, this research needs to adopt both quantitative and qualitative methods so the full impact of surviving any form of bias incident can be documented.

In order to structure this ongoing research in a positive and productive manner, the appointment of a coordinating body to monitor this research into bias incidents against homosexually active men is necessary. This body would be responsible for coordinating studies of ways to better

a) Increase the level of awareness concerning the issues.

b) Lobby for legislative changes.

c) Liaise between police and homosexually active men.

d) Increase awareness for police sensitivity regarding issues.

e) Lobby for further police training programs regarding issues related to homosexually active men.

f) Increase awareness within the medical profession regarding the needs of homosexually active men.

g) Promote educational programs for the general community and homosexually active men.

The objectives of this coordinating body should be as follows.

1) To identify what legislative changes are needed to prevent all incidents of bias against homosexually active men.

2) To ascertain if the community requires support organisations that will offer help and support to any man who has experienced a bias incident because of his sexual orientation.

3) To evaluate the need for training programs for police which will encourage sensitivity regarding the needs of homosexually active men who have survived bias incidents.

4) To determine if training programs for educational institutions addressing the negative outcomes of bias incidents against homosexually active men are required.

5) To provide support for homosexually active men following any exposure to violence, harassment, persecution or discrimination.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the issues that have arisen from this study have highlighted a need for urgent action and ongoing research. The wealth of information gained here has not been generalised, allowing for sweeping change. It has however, identified many issues for academics, politicians, police, community organisations, educational bodies and future researchers to examine. If homosexually active men are to be allowed to live fulfilling lives out in the community then it is imperative that these issues be openly examined and discussed.

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Appendix A

<u>Phenomenological Strategies</u>

<u>Historical</u>

Historical research or histography aims to study events of the past by examining primary and secondary resource material. It requires the structured systematic collection, interpretation and critical evaluation of data relating to past events. Like other research methods, historical inquiry has as its goal the discovery of new knowledge. The historian's function is not to judge, praise or condemn the actors or actions of the past, but to understand how they came into being, and the forces that shaped their existence. It is not simply a chronological documentation of the past, but a critical analysis of events (Churchouse, 1993).

<u>Case study</u>

Case studies, a second approach, are conducted when the researcher requires data on phenomena that have not previously been well researched. The purpose of a case study is to describe the detailed characteristics or attributes of a person, family, group, or community. Whilst the number of participants involved in the study is small, the number of variables involved is usually large (Burns and Grove, 1987).

Ethnography

Next is ethnography, which has evolved from the discipline of anthropology and is defined by Leininger (1985, p.35) "as the systematic process of observing, detailing, describing, documenting, and analyzing the lifeways or particular patterns of a culture (or subculture) in order to grasp the lifeways or patterns of the people in their familiar environment". The aim of this approach is to describe cultures by providing detailed accounts of events, situations and circumstances that cannot be examined by other methods.

Grounded theory

Grounded theory, presented by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, is the method best adopted when research is being conducted in an area where little data has previously been conducted. The key component of this method is its strong focus on the development of theory without the use of pre-existing theory as an organising framework. Differing from other research methods, grounded theory requires the researcher to simultaneously observe, collect, organise and form theory from the data at the same time (Burns and Grove, 1987).

Appendix B

Interview Question Guide

Demographic Information:

What year were you born?

What is your race/ethnicity?

What is your home area code/suburb?

How would you describe your sexual identity?

- Gay...Homosexual...Bisexual...Heterosexual

Bias Incident Information

Tell me of an incident that has happened to you which you perceived was related

to your sexual orientation?

How did this make you feel?

How did this affect you?

Post Incident Action:

What action did you take after the incident?

IF REPORTED TO THE POLICE

Tell me the service and attention given to you by the police when you reported

the incident?

- friendly...helpful...understanding...aggressive...homophobic...
  unhelpful.

IF MEDICAL ATTENTION SOUGHT

Tell me the service and attention given to you by the medical team you sought

help from?

- friendly...helpful...understanding...aggressive...homophobic...
  unhelpful.

Why did you not report the incident to the police?

Why did you not report the incident to a medical practitioner?

Researchers Guiding Questions:

The incident:

Where did this incident take place?

When did this incident take place?

What was the approximate time of the incident?

- *am/pm*

Is it ongoing?

Were weapons used?

Was verbal abuse used, before...during...after the incident?

Was property stolen/damaged during the incident?

What do you think motivated the incident

- *your behaviour...your appearance...homophobia...racism...*

  AIDS...sexual assault...unknown?

Others Involved:

Were you alone or with others?

Were there witnesses to the incident?

How were you injured

- *Physically...emotionally...mentally?*

Reporting issues

Did you report the incident to any other organisation?

Did you identify yourself as a person who has sex with other men to the police or the health worker?

Were you asked if the incident was sexually oriented by the police or the health worker?

Have you any other comments?

How did you find out about this study?

Appendix C

Publicity Strategies

An extensive advertising campaign was planned and implemented three weeks prior

to the data collection week. In discussion with public relation officers, it was

believed that this time frame was appropriate. If started too soon, people would

begin to ignore or forget information, and if started later there would not be a

reasonable distribution of information.

The strategies adopted in advertising this study included the following.

Poster

A poster was designed by graphic designer Gary Bird from the West Australian

TAFE Graphics Department. The size of the poster was A2 and A4. The number of

posters printed was 200 A2 and 1000 A4.

Poster Distribution

Posters were distributed to:

- Connections nightclub

- DC's nightclub

- The Northbridge Hotel

- The Court Hotel

- Beaufort Street Sauna

- Community Organisations

- Western Australia AIDS Council

- Western Australia Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service

- Family Planning Clinics

- STD Clinics - Metropolitan and Country

- University Campus

- Western Australia Metropolitan and Country Libraries

- Western Australia Hospital Emergency Departments - where permitted

- Western Australia Police Stations - where permitted

- Western Australia General Practice surgeries - where permitted

Newspaper Article

A feature article outlining the study, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, details of how the study will be conducted, dates, phone numbers and times the telephones were open, was distributed to papers and magazines promoting the study.

Institutions to which the feature article was sent include:

- West Australian - Kerry Goode - journalist

- Sunday Times - Chris Thomas - journalist

- Westside observer - Gavin McGoven - Editor

- Community Newspapers

- Country newspapers

- Campaign Magazine

- Outrage Magazine

- Rolling Stone Magazine

- Harambee - Edith Cowan University magazine

- SIERA - for newsletter

- Sexual Assault Group - for newsletter

Advertisements

Paid advertisements were placed in major newspapers;

- West Australian

- Sunday Times

- Community Newspapers

- Country Newspapers

Mail-out to Members of Community Organisations

The A4 poster with a statement of the research details on the back was sent out to community organisation's newsletters. These organisations include:

- Western Australia AIDS Council

- Western Australia Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service

- Country Network

- Australian Bisexual Network

- Breakaway (Gay youth group)

- Gay and Lesbian Equality

- Western Australia Gay League

- Perth Outdoor Group

- Integrity (gay and lesbian Anglicans)

- Murdoch University Gay and Lesbian Society

- People Living with HIV and AIDS

- University of Western Australia - The Wilde Alliance

Radio Interviews

Contact to radio stations for interviews with the researcher were made to:

- ABC Radio - Peter Holland

- 6NR - Martin Kavanagh reporter

- 6PR - Howard Sattler

- 100 FM

- RTR - Western Australia University

Appendix D

<u>Bracketing: The Researcher's Perspective of the Experience of Surviving Bias</u>
<u>Incidents.</u>

My interest in this area of study started many years ago. It was first triggered when

a close friend came to me battered and bleeding following what he described as an

assault and robbery. It was not until two weeks later while I was visiting him in

hospital following surgery to his shattered arm that he disclosed he was beaten

outside a toilet block in the local park. Begging me not to tell anyone he described

in detail the incident, his shame and embarrassment at having to tell a friend what

he had been up to. Never did he disclose the true nature of the event to anyone else.

His story was never to become a crime statistic.

Concerned at the impact of this incident, I decided to pursue avenues where support

could be gained to assist my friend in dealing with the emotional upheaval that he

was living. There was nowhere for him to go. At this point in my life I also felt

unable to help him.

Over the years the image of him telling me his story stayed with me. I then decided

to look further at what support was available to help other men who may have

experienced any bias incidents. I joined and trained to be a counsellor for the West

Australian Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service where I hoped to gain an insight

into the needs and mechanisms that homosexually active men required when

addressing some of the issues. It was at this time I realised that there was a deficit in the literature regarding the specific issue of homosexually active men and the impact of surviving bias incidents.

Having also experienced the incidents described in the introduction, I decided that this deficit in knowledge needed to be addressed. From this I have concentrated my time and energy into the closer examination of the lived experience of homosexually active men who survive any form of bias incident.

In undertaking this study I have listed the preconceived ideas about the experiences of homosexually active men based on my personal experiences, discussions with friends, and media coverage .

- Experiencing any form of bias incident impacts immensely on homosexually active men.

- Men disclosing that they were at public toilets seeking sexual contact may cause feelings of guilt and shame.

- Homosexually active men fear rejection from friends and family if they were to disclose to them their actions preceding the bias incident.

- Homosexually active men fear the response they will receive from the police if they disclose their sexual orientation.

- Homosexually active men have a decreased trust when dealing with police.

- There are no services available to homosexually active men to assist them with their emotional turmoil.

Appendix E

Ethics Statement

I do ensure confidentiality and anonymity and therefore I do not want you to give any personal details or identifying information because if the subject being researched was to become the subject of an investigation I am required to disclose the source if subpoenaed.