

## In Their Words

I see people on the street talking about how gay people...  
...are an abomination.  
There are some places that open their arms to LGBT people...  
...then there's some people that are just naysayers.  
It's not embraced or degraded. It's just there.  
Maybe...maybe...  
...it depends on your kind of LGBT.  
*"... you're popular, so you're cool with us..."*  
Sometimes I hate this community, but sometimes...I love it.

Growing up...is so confusing.  
I'm just like everyone else.  
Sexuality is such a small part of me...  
...I mean, we're all a little gay inside...  
But...I'm the only out transgender person I know.  
It seems like there's no one in this town that's LGBT.  
When you're a gay kid...  
...you depend on other people who are straight to accept you.  
You gotta be accepting. Don't be an asshole!  
I've been pushed really far to the point of self-harming and attempted suicide.

I don't have that many people that I can just talk to.  
Straight counselors? They don't know what they're doing.  
There needs to be a queer youth shelter...  
It would be. So. Amazing.  
I enjoy meeting people who identify similar to me...  
It's like...magnetism.  
My straight friends? They're cool.  
We don't go to gay lunch. We go to lunch.  
But, sometimes they don't understand me.  
LGBT adults? I usually just go to people my own age  
I mean, they're still adults...  
But...knowing they're out and happy...  
Helps reassure me that it'll be okay.  
If I needed an adult, I would probably go to my mom.  
...My mom is really mean about that stuff.  
But, she let me stay at home...  
...even though I'm bisexual.

If you know where to look, there's queer stuff here.  
If you don't, well...you're fucked.  
We don't have any LGBT support in our community.  
Fridays we go to the LGBT Center...  
...but it's 30 minutes away...I don't even know how to drive...  
And I'm scared to open up...  
I wouldn't want people to think I'm gay...  
Besides, you can only meet people like that online.  
Tumblr? It's the gay person's haven.  
And, sometimes you get married on Facebook.

I have some LGBT friends.  
I did go to my school's GSA...  
The library.  
The park.  
Social media.  
Planned Parenthood.  
The LGBT Center.  
It's pretty well a safe haven.  
But...they need more transgender awareness.

I kept wanting to come back.  
I'm not alone.  
You're not weird. That's nice.  
I'm more okay with myself.  
I learned drag...  
...if I can be confident in six-inch heels with a wig on my head...  
...I can be confident in my Converse and no wig  
I've gotten to love not only the sexuality side of myself...but also me as a whole.

Note: This found poem was created using only interview and survey quotes from participants in a research study. Participants described what it's like to be a gender or sexual minority youth in their small towns and rural communities. For more information about the study, check out the website:  
[www.ilyouthsupportsurvey.org](http://www.ilyouthsupportsurvey.org)

© Megan S. Pacey, PhD 2015  
All Rights Reserved