

Lesbian and Gay Awareness Training: A Critical Analysis

by

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Abstract

In this thesis, I explore lesbian and gay awareness training from a critical perspective. Lesbian and gay awareness training represents one of the few contemporary interventions attempting to effect positive social change on behalf of lesbians and gay men, and my research assesses whether and how this social phenomenon works. My research brings together a diverse range of ideas from critical psychology, lesbian and gay psychology and feminist psychology, using a (predominantly qualitative) multi-method approach with an emphasis on the process of training in action. I draw on a range of data sources, namely: tape-recordings of ‘live’ training sessions; interviews with trainers and trainees; field notes; pre-and post- training homophobia scales; and post-training evaluation forms. These data are analysed using descriptive statistics (Chapter 3), thematic analysis (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 8), (thematic) discourse analysis (Chapters 6 and 7), and conversation analysis (Chapter 9). In seven empirical chapters I analyse various aspects of training. In Chapter 3, I demonstrate that training ‘works’ when evaluated using outcome measures, and I critique the liberal ideology embodied in homophobia scales. I focus on training exercises, in Chapter 4, and I show how training is couched within a broad liberal framework. I examine pitfalls in training and how to overcome them from the trainers’ perspective, in Chapter 5. Chapter 6, presents a discursive analysis of how trainees talk about their behaviour and attitude ‘change’ following training, and Chapter 7 analyses ways that mundane heterosexism is manifest in training. Chapters 8 and 9 analyse questions from the floor and highlight how the ‘real’ event differs from training manual advice. In the final chapter, I discuss the contributions and implications of my research for social change and indicate some future developments for research on lesbian and gay awareness training, and for lesbian and gay psychology.

Chapter 1

Psychology and Social Change, In Relation to Lesbian and Gay Awareness Training

‘INTERCOM – SOUTH WEST LGBT COMMUNITIES

Is seeking an Equal Opportunities Trainer to work with employers, colleges of further education, sixth-forms etc. in Devon & Cornwall to eliminate barriers that deter lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people from accessing learning, skills & employment.

Exeter-based, 2 years, 36 hours, £20, 000’ (Job Advert, Pink Paper, 19 July, 2002)

Background

Lesbian and Gay Awareness Training (LGAT) is the term I have chosen to describe short experiential courses about sexuality provided by external trainers for (primarily public sector) organisations in the UK, as part of their employee training programs. LGAT aims to provide a group of professionals – in a short space of time, often half a day – with a heightened awareness of lesbian, gay, and bisexual sexualities. Achieving this ‘heightened awareness’ involves engaging the group in experiential exercises that aim to enhance their knowledge and understanding of lesbian and gay issues, and improve their professional practice when dealing with lesbian and gay men, be they clients or colleagues. It also involves supplying the group with factual information about lesbian and gay oppression, recounting anecdotes and stories describing (some of) the lived experiences of lesbians and gay men, and answering questions raised by the group. I have chosen the term LGAT because it best captures the content of the training data I have collected in this research. It makes the focus on lesbians and gay men explicit, reflects the provision of information and understanding in liberal terms (‘awareness’), and training denotes an emphasis on practical and skills-based learning. My title is not necessarily the title provided for such courses, many courses are just headed ‘sexuality’. I have omitted ‘bisexual’ because in the UK at present bisexuality (and transexuality and intersexuality)

do not receive much, or any coverage in courses (c.f. Eliason, 1997; Phillips & Fischer, 1998). Much LGAT is provided in the US, but my focus is on the UK. Essentially LGAT is similar in style and content to training on allied issues such as 'race', gender and disability.

I have been conducting LGAT since 1996. I became an LGAT trainer after being employed as a sessional worker for a gay and bisexual men's health project¹. As the only woman working for the project I was soon asked to co-facilitate training - with my gay male co-workers - for outside agencies who wanted their equal opportunities courses to cover sexuality in line with their equal opportunities policy, or with organisations we were keen to make inroads into (e.g., the police). I have, in the last 6 years, run sessions with the police, youth workers, social workers, county council employees, foster carers, help-line staff, nurses, and staff employed in various voluntary agencies.

When I started this research, I had never seen an advert like the one detailed above in the UK. This recent job advertisement for a full-time lesbian and gay awareness trainer is indicative of the shifting status of this form of training. Training on sexuality is becoming more 'legitimate', community organisations are gaining funding to provide trainers, training contracts with external agencies are being secured (Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights, 2002), and training manuals are being developed. The issue is one of demand and supply, and both are slowly increasing. The legal context is important in understanding the growing demand for training. Protection for lesbians and gay men from discrimination in employment (distinct from any protection provided under general anti-discrimination legislation) is currently provided in six European countries: Denmark; Finland; France; Ireland; Slovenia; and Sweden (International Lesbian and Gay Association, 1999). There is still no equivalent in the UK of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975, amended 1986), Race Relations Act (1976), or the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), to afford for lesbians and gay men protection against discrimination. However, there have been some recent legal and policy changes to ensure rights for lesbians and

¹ The project wanted to employ a woman able to provide sexual health education to lesbians and bisexual women, to complement their existing work with gay and bisexual men.

gay men in a number of different arenas (Lewis, 1998). In January 2000, the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the armed forces was officially lifted in the UK. In March 2000, sex education guidelines for secondary schools were released stressing the importance of recognising homophobic bullying, and the needs of young lesbians and gay men for information and advice (Ellis, 2001b). In Scotland, Section 2a of the Local Government Act (1986) banning the “promotion” of homosexuality in schools was repealed in June 2000, and in November 2000 the age of consent for sex between men was equalised at 16 in England and Wales. Probably most significant for the provision of LGAT is the Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 (adopted under Article 13 of the EC Treaty) which established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. It included, for the first time, ‘sexual orientation’ as a separate category. This must be implemented by December 2003 in all fifteen European Union member states, including the UK (Wintemute, 2001). To this end the Department for Trade and Industry has recently (December, 2001) published proposals for implementing the EU Directive. The public consultation document *Towards Equality and Diversity* contains a chapter which discusses the directive’s purpose to ‘lay down a general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of...sexual orientation as regards employment and occupation’ (Roche, 2002: 38). All this points to an increase in the provision of LGAT within organisations, because changes in legislation can help create a climate where education and training is encouraged. Although the design, provision and evaluation of training has not, to date, been a key topic for lesbian and gay psychologists, now, it will undoubtedly become more so. The research reported in this thesis is in the vanguard of this development.

There have been times, when conducting LGAT, that I have been angered, astonished, amused or bemused by something that someone has said. I remember, for example, a session with county council workers when one of the trainees said indignantly ‘they’ve got their own clubs – that’s not fair’, and another session where a man asked tentatively whether there was such a thing as ‘gay food’. When reflecting on what I (or my co-trainers) have said, there have been points when I have felt as though I have rehashed the same old arguments time and time again, that training is just a stalemate, a stand off

between completely polarised and incommensurate world views. After other training sessions, I have felt like we - trainers and trainees - are warm, caring individuals who are all on the same side, or even that training is a panacea for all heterosexist ills, a radical, 'at-the-coal-face', hands-on context in which lesbian and gay perspectives take centre stage and have power, authenticity, and legitimacy.

I was motivated to conduct this research by my personal investment in discovering how trainers deliver training, and how they manage difficulties. I wanted to allay my own fears as someone who was, at that point, a relatively novice trainer, and who was finding it a rather intimidating experience. I had anxieties (sometimes real, sometimes imagined) about reactions from the group: How will I deal with homophobic comments? What if they do not turn up when they know what the topic is? Will they think all lesbians look like me? What if I make them more homophobic?

This thesis is about what happens in LGAT sessions: my analysis is based on recordings of actual sessions, as well as interviews with participants (trainers and trainees), and pre- and post- training homophobia scales. This research is situated in and draws on the fields of critical, feminist, and lesbian and gay psychology, and literature on diversity and training. My theoretical approach is a critical (predominantly) qualitative one, informed by lesbian and gay politics and constructionist and discursive concerns. My research prioritises the political above a particular theoretical or methodological framework, because this is germane to the overarching goal of social change. My thesis explores what trainers and trainees say and do in training, the extent to which this meets various objectives of training, and how we might do 'better' as trainers in challenging heterosexism.

My research aims/questions in this thesis are:

- To fulfil my personal aim to develop, my own - and other trainers - understanding of lesbian and gay awareness training.

- To provide an analysis of whether and how education can produce positive social change for lesbians and gay men and in so doing make a significant contribution to the fields of critical, lesbian and gay, and feminist psychology.
- To contribute to critical, lesbian and gay, and feminist psychology an exploration of the role of different methodological approaches in understanding social issues and the social world.

In the rest of this Chapter, I outline psychology's contributions to social change, and provide overviews of the fields of critical, feminist, and lesbian and gay psychology. I introduce education as a means of social change, and review the literature on diversity and lesbian and gay awareness training. I end with a chapter by chapter summary of the thesis.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

'Bring psychology to society' was a phrase frequently seen in the British Psychological Society (BPS) publication *The Psychologist* throughout last year (MacKay, 2001). *The Psychologist* ran a series of 'action plans' – on crime prevention, war and peace, and terrorism – aimed at generating practical recommendations to achieve action-orientated goals. The BPS claims that it wants psychology to be relevant to social policy, to be informed by and grounded in 'real' world issues, and to be more influential in society. The idea that psychology should benefit society is not new, and embedded within it is the notion that psychology should be concerned with social change - that psychologists should 'giv[e] psychology away' (Miller 1969, quoted in Uzzell, 2000: 333). Political grounded research was *institutionally* endorsed in the UK in Geoff Lindsay's (1995: 498) BPS presidential introduction in *The Psychologist* when he emphasised that psychology 'must be seen to exist within a wider system of values and against the notion of "value free" scientific enquiry'. Psychology should 'seek to have something to offer society on the significant problems facing it' (Howitt, 1991: 148). Psychological inquiry has a longstanding commitment to being 'socially responsible' and to changing 'undesirable' behaviours, and conversely being a tool of social control (Foucault, 1977, 1979;

Kitzinger, 1987). In this thesis, I attempt to advance ‘socially responsible’ goals by focusing my attentions on an applied site (training) where advancing pro-lesbian/gay change is of paramount importance. Psychology – within and beyond the bounds of lesbian and gay psychology - should be an explicitly *political* and *value-full* endeavour that aims to foster (positive) social change (see also Peel, 2001b, 2002b). Three areas of psychology which are explicitly concerned with solving social problems are the fields of critical psychology, lesbian and gay psychology, and feminist psychology, which I now introduce.

Critical Psychology

Critical psychology has been described as an ‘umbrella term’ (Walkerdine, 2001) or a ‘metadiscipline’ (Austin & Prilleltensky, 1999) which ‘draws together the wide variety of radical perspectives on the discipline’ (Parker, 1999: 5). Walkerdine (2001), in her editorial in the first issue of the *International Journal of Critical Psychology*, highlights the eclectic and creative nature of critical psychology, in that it draws on a diverse range of influences within and outside of psychology (including, cultural studies). Walkerdine attributes the development of critical psychology to the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s, including the New Left, Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Movement and Gay Liberation Movement, and argues that this field, in its broadest sense, is coming of age. This ‘metadiscipline’ has grown in popularity in recent years, there have been two international conferences on critical psychology (in 1999), the establishment of a centre for Critical Psychology (at the University of Western Sydney), and the publication of two new journals (*Annual Review of Critical Psychology* and *International Journal of Critical Psychology*). The various subdisciplines and approaches that constitute critical psychology elude easy definition according to some scholars (Spears, 1997: 1). Indeed, many psychologists who label themselves ‘critical’ are reluctant to provide a unitary definition of the field and celebrate the diversity and multiplicity of theoretical approaches, methods and goals that find a home in the field, in part, because this is seen as a form of resistance to the homogenising tendencies of mainstream psychology (Frosh, 2000; Prilleltensky & Fox, 1997). As Sloan (2000b: 232) writes: ‘there is no single

unified critical psychology...instead we have psychologies, critiques of psychologies, critical psychologies and critiques of critical psychologies’.

Sloan (2000a) brings together in his edited volume, *Critical Psychology: Voices for change*, twenty critical ‘voices’ from around the world whom he asked to discuss their own meanings of critical psychology, what they felt were the ‘big issues’ and principles of critical psychology, and how they practice critical psychology. An overarching theme that ties the work of these scholars together is a deep personal dissatisfaction with mainstream psychology, and a concomitant (academic and personal) commitment to ‘doing good’, and contributing to a more just and equitable society. So critical psychologists, share two common concerns. One is critical perspectives on the theory and methods of mainstream psychology: ‘[critical psychology] believes that psychology has adopted a paradigm of inquiry that is ill-suited to understanding human behaviour and experience’ (Sampson, 2000: 1). The field is concerned to undermine the positivist-empiricism of mainstream psychology which has been (and continues to be) used to deter social change and to buttress the status quo: it is argued that traditional liberal norms of research ‘provide ideological support to dominant institutions and channel psychologists’ work and resources in system-maintaining rather than system-challenging directions’ (Fox, 2000: 22). The other key concern is with progressive politics in some form; aligning with oppressed groups and urging psychology to work toward social justice. Or as Prilleltensky (1999: 100) puts it, critical psychology ‘is critical of society as much as it is critical of psychology’, and because of this, critical research ‘should be...a more thoroughly practical endeavour’ (Parker, 1999: 16). Importantly, critical psychologists are also united in opposition to conventional psychology, because of mainstream psychology’s ‘history of racism, sexism, heterosexism’ (Condor, 1997: 112).

One, if not the key, debate in critical psychology has been the degree to which critical gazes should be focused inwards, on critiquing the discipline, or outwards in providing critiques of society. Discourse analysis and anti-positivist perspectives (Parker, 1997a, 1999; Potter, 1997) are often directed towards psychology as a discipline and ‘highlight how positivist research is dangerous in the very way it conceals moral-political values’

(Parker, 1997b: 158). Whereas other critical psychologists are more concerned that scholarly work should be directed outside psychology so that, critical knowledge is ‘used at the service of the oppressed’ ‘not to play some modern or postmodern game devoid of political objectives’ (Prilleltensky, 1999: 103), and ‘look[s] to the day-to-day experience of people’s lives’ (Ussher, 2000: 7). In other words, some critical psychologists have been primarily concerned with critiques of psychology and the advancement of post-positivist methods as a force for changing the discipline (e.g., Nightingale & Neilands, 1997). Others have seen the primary thrust of critical psychology as working for social justice using whatever methods and theories are suitable for advancing political goals, including mainstream positivist approaches and quantitative research if this is the most expedient (e.g., Kitzinger, 1997a; Wilkinson 1997a).

There are many ways - as I outline in relation to feminist psychology and lesbian and gay psychology below - in which critical psychologists have worked for social justice and social change, within either, or both of these strands (i.e., critiquing the discipline, or critiquing society). The challenging of oppression and the broad goal of achieving social justice are, however, crucial². Critical psychology is the banner under which the various elements of this thesis are united, as this diverse field embraces a plethora of critiques of psychology and society. Discourse analysis (e.g., Potter, 1997b), lesbian and gay psychology (e.g., Kitzinger, 1997a), feminist psychology (e.g., Wilkinson, 1997a b), and (even) conversation analysis (e.g., Forrester, 1999) all take up and progress different critical strands of the field.

Feminist Psychology³

Feminist psychology has had an ‘enormous influence’ (Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997: 247) on the ‘metadiscipline’ of critical psychology. Feminism has been defined as the political

² It is beyond the scope of this brief overview to document the numerous ways in which critical psychologists have theorised and challenged the racism, within and beyond psychology (but see for example, Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994; Marshall et al., 1999; Richards, 1997).

³ In attempts to map the terrain of critical psychology, the fields of feminist psychology and lesbian and gay psychology are often subsumed under the banner heading of critical psychology, although both fields pre-date the development of critical psychology.

theory and practice that struggles to free all women (Griffin, 1995). Feminist psychology – contrary to ‘psychology of women’ (Paludi, 2002) or ‘psychology of gender’ in which more liberal agendas predominate - ‘is avowedly political’ (Wilkinson, 1997a; Unger & Crawford, 1996). The label ‘feminist psychology’ is used to indicate the overtly political nature of this field, as was highlighted in the inaugural issue of *Feminism & Psychology*: ‘the journal is about the conjunction of feminism (not women, or gender, or sex roles) and psychology; and feminism comes first in our order of priority’ (Wilkinson, 1991: 9-10). Feminist psychologists have debated whether they should ‘aim to *change* psychology or...aim to *overthrow* it’ (Wilkinson, 1997b: 263). The relationship between feminism and psychology has been conceived as a problematic one: an ‘uneasy alliance’ (Crawford, 1997). Feminist psychologists have always been critical of mainstream psychology (e.g., Weisstein, 1968/1993), and indeed the field emerged *as* a critique of psychology. An influential ‘first wave’ feminist psychologist, Helen Thompson Wooley, for instance, concluded, at the turn of the last century, from her examination of the research conducted into sex differences which characterised women as inferior to men:

‘There is perhaps no field aspiring to be scientific where flagrant personal bias, logic martyred in the course of supporting a prejudice, unfounded assertions, and even sentimental rot and drivel, have run riot to such an extent as here’ (Wooley, 1910: 340).

Pioneering ‘second wave’ feminist psychology, Phyllis Chesler, argued at the 1970 American Psychological Association (APA) conference, that the APA should provide ‘one million dollars “in reparations”’ to women who have been harmed, rather than helped by psychologists and mental health professionals. Women, she argued, have been ‘punitively labeled, overly tranquilized, seduced while in treatment, hospitalized against their will, given shock therapy, lobotomized, and, above all, disliked as too “aggressive”, “promiscuous”, “depressed”, “ugly”, “old”, “disgusting” or “incurable”’ (Chesler, 1989: xvii).

These examples are indicative of the fact that feminist psychologists have consistently, and forcefully, argued against psychology as a mechanism for the social control of women. Sue Wilkinson (1997b: 254-263) outlines five traditions through which feminist psychology has criticised mainstream psychology's portrayal of women as inferior. First, it is argued that psychology is 'bad science' in that it is guilty of the mismeasurement of women (Tavris, 1992). This approach argues that, for instance, many of psychology's "classic" theories are based on studies conducted on men alone (e.g., Kohlberg's [1976] theory of moral reasoning) and then the results are unquestioningly generalised to women. On this basis, women are judged according to the extent that they 'measure up' to a male norm. Second, it is argued that the problem is not women, but women's internalisation of oppression, which necessitates women working to transform themselves (e.g., through the 'compensatory socialisation' provided by some feminist therapists). Third, it is argued that a *different* perspective can be gained by listening to women's voices (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Fourth, it is argued that the question of sex differences should be displaced through use of the concept 'androgyny' (Bem, 1974). Fifth, it is argued that the question of sex differences should be reconstructed by focusing on the socially constructed nature of the categories 'women' and 'men'. These various traditions operate from (often) theoretically and methodological incompatible perspectives. Feminist psychology, is not wholly defined by its engagement and with, and critique of, the mainstream. As I noted earlier, the field emerged as a critique of the mainstream, but over the last century feminist research has broadened considerably from consideration of sex differences (i.e., whether women are the 'same' as, or 'different' to men), to engage with debates *between* feminists and consider topics of relevance to women which had previously been considered either too taboo or too trivial to be worthy of serious study (Riger, 1992).

Feminist scholarly and activist work has often focused on 'liberating' women and improving women's lives (albeit historically mostly white, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle class women). Feminist psychology's engagement with the abuses of women (in their various forms) have created significant social changes - at a legislative and policy level, as well as at an individual level. We now have terms such as 'date rape' and 'wife

battering' whereas before they were merely thought of, by women, as "life" (Crawford, 1997). Terms, such as, 'sexual harassment' did not exist prior to feminist social scientists reflecting on their own and other women's collective experiences in the workplace (e.g., Thomas & Kitzinger, 1994). The naming of sexual harassment and subsequent work publicising it by Lin Farley (1978, cited in Kitzinger & Thomas, 1995: 32) and others 'led to a wide range of surveys on the newly identified problem' (Kitzinger, 2002: 3). Some feminists have quantified the amount and extent of men's violence towards women (Dobash & Dobash, 1992), whereas other feminist psychologists have been highly critical of so-called objective scientific and experimental modes of inquiry and have worked against the notion of 'value-free' research (e.g., Nicolson, 1992, 1995). Positivist and postmodern approaches do co-exist within feminist psychology. Even some feminist psychologists renowned for their commitment to social constructionism, who have been highly critical of positivism and treating women's 'voices' as a (more or less) accurate reflection of their experience, suggest that: 'for feminists committed to social change, there may be good reasons to set aside these criticisms in pursuit of our pragmatic goals' (Kitzinger, 2002: 6). Therefore, feminist psychologists prioritise the pragmatic, political, feminist goals of research, and to this end 'many theoretically and practically incompatible approaches...co-exist' (Wilkinson, 1996: 2; see also below).

The 'invention' (or discovery) of sexual harassment and its documentation as a serious problem for women is but one example of the efficacy of placing political goals above others (theoretical, methodological). 'Sexual harassment' has been a success story for feminist research: within a decade it had been recognised as a human rights concern and had been institutionally endorsed in workplace equal opportunities policy (e.g., the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975). Thus, feminist psychology adopts a plethora of critical positions both on the androcentrism of traditional 'malestream' psychology, and on heteropatriarchal society, with the fundamental goal of creating a better world for women.

Lesbian and Gay Psychology

In a similar manner as feminist psychology, lesbian and gay psychology developed out of a critique of mainstream psychology's exclusion, mistreatment of, and ignorance about lesbians and gay men (Brown, 1989). The field has been defined as 'psychology which is explicit about its relevance to lesbians and/or gay men, does not assume the homosexual pathological, and *seeks to counter discrimination and prejudice against lesbians and/or gay men*' (Kitzinger, 1997a, my emphasis). The field is strongly committed to 'contribut[ing] psychological perspectives to social policy initiatives which provide for better quality of life for lesbian and gay people' (Kitzinger, 1999a: 4). The development of the field of lesbian and gay psychology is often linked to the removal of homosexuality *per se* from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1973⁴. In 1973, in the US, the Association of Lesbian and Gay Psychologists (ALGP) was formed in order to lobby the American Psychological Association (APA) to create a group to represent lesbian and gay psychologists. This lobbying role resulted, 2 years later, in the establishment of a lesbian and gay psychologists' task force (Morin & Rothblum, 1991). In the same year, the APA included sexual orientation in its Equal Employment Opportunity policy, and as Conger (1975: 633) reported 'urge[d] all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations'. Division 44 (The Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues⁵) was officially established in 1985 and has always had a political as well as academic function (Kimmel & Browning, 2000).

Prior to the 1970s, lesbians and gay men were pathologised by psychology. The hegemonic position of traditional psychology was that lesbianism and male homosexuality were 'a symptom of neurosis and of a grievous personality disorder' (Kronemeyer, 1980: 7). Psychology was used as a justification for subjecting lesbians and gay men to batteries of 'therapeutic' procedures widely known as conversion therapy

⁴ Homosexuality as a mental illness was only removed from the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases [ICD] in 1993.

⁵ Originally called the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian and Gay Issues.

(Feldman & McCulloch, 1971) aimed at curing us of our ‘disease’. Jay and Young (1979: 722) found, in their sample of lesbians and gay men, that 20% of gay men and 8% of lesbians had been to a therapist to be ‘cured’ (cited in J. Hart, 1981b: 40). Steven Morin (1977: 663), in his review of research on homosexuality in *Psychological Abstracts* between 1967-1974, found that the majority of research operated from ‘an outdated medical model’. Seventy percent of research was, he argued, devoted to answering three questions: ‘are homosexuals sick?’; ‘can homosexuality be diagnosed?’ and ‘what causes homosexuality and how can it be prevented?’. In contrast, research in lesbian and gay psychology has challenged the sickness model of homosexuality, asked different questions, and has convincingly demonstrated that lesbians and gay men are as mentally healthy as heterosexuals. Ground-breaking research conducted by early lesbian and gay psychologists such as June Hopkins (1969) demonstrated that a sample group of lesbians were more ‘critical and cool’, ‘progressive’ and ‘self-sufficient’ (Hopkins, 1969: 1434) than a sample group of heterosexual women. Before 1969, about 75% of all studies on lesbianism/male homosexuality relied exclusively on interviews (e.g., psychiatric case studies) and questionnaires (Shively et al., 1984). By contrast, Hopkins, and other pioneers in the field of lesbian and gay psychology, clung to positivist-empiricism, and were concerned to undermine observations ‘too subjectively made’ and bolster ‘accuracy and objectivity’ (Hopkins, 1969: 1433, see also Peel, 2002b). Adherence to the tenants of ‘science’ was a strategy to legitimise this counter-hegemonic knowledge, and made non-pathologising research about lesbians and gay ‘palatable’ to mainstream psychology by critiquing anti-lesbian/gay research as bad science.

Calls for ‘better science’ have resounded from (until recently the predominantly US-based field of) lesbian and gay psychology. Prominent North American lesbian and gay psychologists view a measure of the ‘success’ of the field as empirical work appearing ‘more frequently in general scientific journals’, and see current research in the field as working towards ‘mainstreaming’ (Herek, 1998: viii). John Gonsiorek (1994) in the preface to the first volume of the *Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues* series, advocated positivist empiricism as *the* way forward for lesbian and gay psychology, and condemned critical perspectives as ‘offer[ing] a fast lane into obscurity

and irrelevance' (p. ix). This series largely fits within a conventional psychological framework. To date, volumes have covered a number of topic areas within an explicitly (or implicitly) positivist empiricist paradigm: 'theory, research and clinical applications of lesbian and gay psychology' (Greene & Herek, 1994); 'AIDS, identity and the community' (Herek, 1995); 'ethnic and cultural diversity' (Greene, 1997); 'stigma and sexual orientation' (Herek, 1998); and 'education, research, and practice' (Greene & Croom, 2000). Although most lesbian and gay psychology has continued to embrace the values of science, in recent years (particularly in the UK) lesbians and gay psychologists have begun to eschew these, and have developed more politically engaged approaches. There is a growing corpus of work within lesbian and gay psychology that examines lesbian and gay issues from a discursive and constructionist perspective (Clarke, 2002a; Coyle, 2000a; Ellis & Kitzinger, 2002; Gough, 1998, 2002; Picavet, 1998; Praat & Tuffin, 1996). Analyses using discourse analysis (DA) focus on the role of language in constructive processes and in the maintenance of institutions and ideologies, such as hetero-patriarchy and heterosexism. In particular, recent work has examined 'anti-homosexual' discourse in New Zealand (McCreanor, 1996), the meanings surrounding lesbianism in South Africa in the 1990s (Potgeiter, 1997), and the use of liberal language to mask heterosexism in media texts (Brickell, 2001).

So, in the 1970s, the 'sick' homosexual was replaced by the 'sick' homophobe in the psychological literature (Kitzinger, 1987, 1990a). Thus, a key shift in the field has been from focusing on homosexuality to focusing on heterosexuality. Early lesbian and gay research emphasized homosexual 'normality' and mental health, and then heterosexuals, and their allegedly faulty or 'pathological' beliefs, about lesbians and gay men were subjected to scrutiny (Johnson et al., 1997). Research which explores heterosexuals' attitudes about lesbians and gay men has been described as an example of research which is 'on the offense' in relation to lesbian and gay human rights (Morin, 1977: 635). This crucial shift resulted in a proliferation of research mapping the characteristics of the 'homophobe'. This research has tended to find that 'homophobes' are more likely to be older and less well educated (Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Nyberg & Alston, 1976; Snyder & Spreizer, 1976), to be authoritarian (Haddock, et al., 1993; MacDonald & Games,

1974), and to be less positive or permissive about sexuality (Nyberg & Alston, 1976; Simon, 1995). Heterosexual men tend to hold more negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men than heterosexual women (Kite & Whitley, 1998; Schellenberg et al., 1999), those who are religious and/or who regularly attend church are more 'homophobic' than those who are not religious or not regular church goers (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Eliason, 1995; Fisher et al., 1993), as are those who have had less close contact with lesbians and gay men (Herek, 1988, 1994; Simon, 1995). Heterosexuals have been found to hold stereotypes of gay men as perverted, effeminate and lonely (Simmons, 1965, cited in Kite, 1994). As Ben-Ari (1998: 60) comments, 'attitudes towards homosexuality is a subject which has received extensive research attention over the last thirty years', and forms part of the move to design interventions attempting to reduce 'homophobia'. Interventions aimed at reducing 'homophobia' have been premised on the notion that "sick heterosexuals" have defective cognitions that can be ameliorated through 'treatment program[s]' (Rudolph, 1989: 82); most often education about, and contact with lesbians and gay men (e.g., Monteith, et al., 1996). In sum, prior to the 1970s the 'characteristics' of homosexuals, and methods for 'treating' homosexuality were normative in psychological research, and after the 1970s this reversed and the 'homophobic' beliefs and behaviours of heterosexuals, and ways to reduce them came under scrutiny⁶.

Lesbian and gay psychology has now 'come of age' (Coyle & Kitzinger, 2002), and it engages with a diverse range of topics (for an overview see Kitzinger et al., 1998). I am writing at a point where the struggle⁷ to found the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section

⁶ The psychotherapist George Weinberg (1972) in *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* first coined the term 'homophobia'. He opened his popular book by announcing that he: 'would never consider a patient healthy unless he [sic] had overcome his prejudice against homosexuality' (p. 1).

⁷ Briefly, the struggle to found the Section began in 1991 when the first proposal for a Psychology of Lesbianism Section was turned down (Comely et al., 1992). A subsequent seven years of lobbying for a Section ensued until the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section was established in 1998. Section proposals submitted to the BPS resulted in heated debate in *The Psychologist* in 1992 and 1995. The proposers were arguing for the 'intellectual development and institutional recognition of this field' (Coyle et al., 1995: 151). Whereas other psychologists voiced antithetical views, such as: 'I object to...the innocent-sounding word "gay" when referring to what is the abnormal practice of anal intercourse between males' (Hamilton, 1995: 151). Many of the reactions from other psychologists were not as visceral as Hamilton's. Some saw the creation of a specific section as political ghettoisation and as 'the ultimate in homophobic actions...what sense can it make to group them together as requiring their own global perspective on psychology?' (Seager, 1995: 295). In 1998, the final ballot, received the biggest 'anti' vote in any comparable ballot in the history of the Society (Wilkinson, 1999).

in the UK has finally succeeded (Wilkinson, 1999). Lesbian and gay psychology has moved well beyond demonstrating the ‘normality’ of lesbians and gay men within psychology as a discipline (Kitzinger, 1997b).

Lesbian and gay psychology has been a successful critical force outside of the discipline. Indeed, it is ‘one of the most politically active and effective psychological fields of the last quarter century’ (Kitzinger, 1999b: 63), through, for example, helping lesbian mothers win custody of their children by establishing that lesbian mothers are as fit to parent as heterosexual mothers (Golombok et al., 1983). A central concern of the field, then, has involved documenting the extent and forms of lesbian and gay oppression, as a precursor to undermining them. Work by psychologists on anti-lesbian/gay hate crimes (e.g., Bradford et al., 1994 cited in Rothblum & Bond, 1996: xvi; Cogan, 1996; Herek & Berrill, 1992; Peel, 1999) has resulted in tangible social change. For example, in the US, Gregory Herek and Kevin Berrill testified about the high levels of anti-gay hate crime at the US congressional hearings on anti-gay violence and harassment, which led in 1990, to the inclusion of ‘sexual orientation’ in the Hate Crime Statistics Act. This then required the national documentation and annual publication of crime statistics, include incidents of anti-lesbian/gay violence (Herek & Berrill, 1992). On a smaller scale, research I was involved in which documented the incidence of anti-lesbian/gay crime in Nottinghamshire resulted in the establishment of a ‘community liaison group’ with representatives from the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community and the local police. This group led to ‘homophobic crime’ being monitored in the area, and joint initiatives (such as the ‘Blow the Whistle on Homophobic Crime’ campaign) being set up to improve the reporting of anti-lesbian/gay incidents. These are just two examples of the broader impact of lesbian and gay psychology. Collectively these forms of psychologically based intervention indicate the substantial contribution lesbian and gay psychology can make to social change on behalf of lesbians and gay men.

Thus, we can see that feminist psychology and lesbian and gay psychology have made significant inroads in changing the oppressive practices of psychology (as an academic and applied discipline), and in working for positive social change in the wider world.

Both have struggled for institutional recognition⁸, and both have succeeded in carving out space within (and beyond) the discipline to engage with women's and lesbian and gay concerns. However, the two fields of feminist and lesbian and gay psychology, despite both having a critical and political emphasis, have remained largely distinct from each other. As Kitzinger (2001: 272) notes, 'each proceeds without much awareness of advances in the other'. In feminist psychology texts, material regarding lesbian women is generally relegated to chapters addressing sexuality, dubbed 'the token lesbian chapter' (Kitzinger, 1996). Broader life issues concerning lesbians are often absent from the feminist psychology literature, lesbian research is marginalized, or the "generic" woman is assumed to be heterosexual (Peel, 2001a). Guidelines for nonheterosexist research (Herek et al., 1991, cited in Rothblum & Bond, 1996), outside and within feminist psychology (e.g., in 'guidelines for submission' in the journal *Feminism & Psychology*) have been developed to attempt to address this problem. Conversely, lesbian and gay psychology is not generally informed by feminist concerns (Kitzinger, 2001). Moreover, lesbian and gay psychology has responded differently to oppression by more often *using* the conventional tools of psychology (e.g., Gonsiorek, 1994; Herek, 1998), whereas feminist psychologists have generally been far more wary of using 'the master's tools to dismantle the master's house' (but see, Unger, 1996).

THEORY AND METHOD IN CRITICAL LESBIAN AND GAY AND FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGY

Debates about the utility of different theories and methods have proliferated in critical psychology. Critical psychologists have devoted a great deal of energy to debating which theory and/or method best fits with their goals for social change (e.g., Rahman, 1999 versus Hegarty, 1999; and Edwards et al., 1995 versus Gill, 1995). These debates detract critical psychologists' attentions away from political goals, and it is somewhat ironic that a field professing a keen interest in positive social change should have become so

⁸ As previously noted, the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section faced much opposition during its attempts to become recognised in the BPS. The Psychology of Women (Division 35) was established in the APA in 1973, whereas The Psychology of Women Section was established in the BPS in 1987 after a two-year struggle. The first proposal was rejected because it was seen by the BPS as 'too political' (Wilkinson, 1990).

absorbed in, and (perhaps) diverted by, theoretical and methodological discussion (Kitzinger, 1999b). In my research, I prioritise pragmatism and political goals over theory and method, and in so doing circumvent many of the debates that have absorbed critical psychologists.

Debates about theory and method within critical psychology have been largely organised around the following poles: Social constructionism versus essentialism, critical discourse analysis (CDA) versus conversation analysis (CA)/discursive psychology (DP), (critical) realism versus relativism and qualitative versus quantitative methods. Critical, lesbian and gay and feminist psychologists have vigorously debated the virtues of these approaches both with each other, and with the psychological mainstream. In debates with the mainstream, social constructionism, relativism, discourse analysis, and (critical) qualitative methods are typically aligned with ‘criticality’, ‘radicalism’ or ‘liberation’, and essentialism, quantitative methods, positivism, and realism are aligned with mainstream norms and values. However, some critical lesbian and gay psychologists and feminist psychologists have advocated the use of positivism, essentialism (e.g., Berrill, 1992; Fish & Wilkinson, 2000; Unger, 1996) and quantitative methods (e.g., Rivers, 2002) in the service of political goals. Indeed, many feminist psychologists, and most lesbian and gay psychologists (particularly in the US), almost exclusively rely on these approaches in their fight against oppression (Gonsiorek, 1994). This said, in the UK especially, there is an increasing emphasis on more obviously ‘critical’ frameworks.

Most ‘critical’ lesbian and gay psychologists and feminist psychologists locate their work within some kind of constructionist (or critical realist) framework (e.g., Kitzinger, 1987; Bohan, 1993; Crawford, 1995; Pratt & Tuffin, 1996). Social constructionism has its roots in the sociological traditions of ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and labelling theory. Constructionism prioritises the constructive and constructed nature of language (or discourse) and rejects the notion that there is an ‘objective window on the world whereby words ‘mirror’ reality’ (Spears, 1997: 5). From a constructionist perspective, concepts are produced through language and in communication with others. Constructionist inquiry is concerned with understanding the

processes by which people make sense of the world in which they live (Gergen, 1985). Other elements of a constructionist approach include a sceptical stance on all truth claims, a recognition of the historically, politically and socially contingent nature of all knowledge, and a rejection of scientific objectivity and the norms and values of mainstream psychology. More ‘radical’ versions of constructionism (e.g., Edwards et al., 1995) suggest that the world is only accessible in and through language. This position denies not that there is anything going on outside of discourse, but the possibility of ever getting at the extra-discursive. Critical psychologists differ on the extent to which they align with a thorough-going constructionist framework. Some, most notably Parker (1992), reject constructionism in favour of critical realism, arguing that constructionism induces political paralysis and offers no basis on which to choose between competing versions of events. Parker also challenges constructionism on the grounds that the goals of critical psychology are political ones and relativism is a ‘slippery slope’ where:

‘those fascinated by the power of discourse cut loose from any connection with a real outside. Texts are becoming the vehicles for the ‘radical’ expression of a purely pragmatic ‘new realism’ which has lost any desire to take underlying structures of oppression and resistance seriously’ (Parker, 1992: 40-41).

This is to say that critical psychologists ‘get so beguiled by the post-modern carnival’ (Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 1997: 70) that they lose sight of the need to construct a better world. Critical realism accommodates the notion of multiple realities but also emphasises the need to recognise the extra-discursive ‘reality’ of the material conditions of oppression.

The most commonly used method of analysis within a constructionist (and a critical realist) framework is some form of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis (DA) is an over-arching term for a field which encompasses thematic and critical discourse analysis, discursive psychology and conversation analysis. Although the many different forms of discourse analysis defy easy description, this type of analysis usually involves close qualitative analysis of textual data within a constructionist (or critical realist) framework

(e.g., Marshall & Woollett, 2000). That is, the data is not treated as a route to an underlying reality, but is of interest in and of itself.

The field of DA is usually divided into ‘top-down’ (macro) and ‘bottom-up’ (micro) analytic approaches. ‘Top down’ approaches (often heavily influenced by post-structuralist – and especially – Foucauldian ideas, and sometimes also psychoanalysis) are so-called because the researcher draws on elements outside of discourse, such as social and psychological structures, to explain the operation of discourse. By contrast, ‘bottom-up’ approaches move from the data being analysed to wider social explanations. This type of approach includes conversation analysis and discursive psychology. The field of discourse analysis can also be divided up according to the unit of analysis. Approaches like CDA, thematic discursive analysis, and interpretative repertoire analysis focus on identifying ‘themes’, ‘patterns’, ‘broad discourses’, and ‘repertoires’ within and across talk and text, whereas, DP and CA focus on interaction as the unit of analysis. CA has its roots in ethnomethodology and is the fine-grained analysis of talk-in-interaction (Atkinson & Heritage, 1994, Sacks, 1995). CA’s central tenet is that talk is a form of action: talk does things like disagreement and ‘coming out’ as lesbian or gay. Social structures and institutions are not prior to, nor determinant of talk, but rather are produced through and within talk. DP has its origins in the sociology of science and is a ‘hybrid approach’ (Wilkinson, 2001: 25), combining elements of CA, rhetorical analysis (Billig, 1996; Billig et al., 1988) and Foucauldian discourse analysis to study a wide range of materials. DP explores the broader construction of talk and text through linguistic resources, rhetorical devices and interpretative repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1995; Potter, 1996). Whereas DP studies are typically topic focused and are made explicitly relevant to the researcher’s concerns (Widdecombe & Wooffitt, 1995), CA studies focus on actions and conversational devices such as ‘comings out’ (Kitzinger, 2000a) and three-part lists (Jefferson, 1990).

In addition to discursive approaches such as CDA and CA, one of the most commonly used types of qualitative analysis within lesbian and gay and feminist psychology is thematic analysis (e.g., Campbell & Schram, 1995, Kitzinger & Willmott, 2002). Like,

CDA and other broader forms of discourse analysis, thematic analysis emphasises the identification of broad themes and patterns within data. Thematic analysis is most often located within a critical realist or essentialist framework, however, increasingly, following the ‘turn-to-language’ within the social sciences, thematic analysis is located within a constructionist/discursive framework. When used within a realist or essentialist framework, the goal of thematic analysis is to faithfully represent the views and experiences of participants. Researchers often try to let the data ‘speak for itself’ and only act as editor (Breakwell, 1995). However, as Fine (1992: 218) notes, as researchers we edit in order to tell our story about the data: ‘social research cast through voices typically involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border *our* arguments’. What participants say in an interview or focus group is treated as a more or less accurate reflection of their true feelings, experiences, thoughts, and beliefs (perhaps influenced by the larger social context). This form of thematic analysis is often descriptive rather than analytic in that the goal of the analysis is simply to report the key themes in the data; rather than analyse them. Thematic analysis which is influenced by discursive/constructionist ideas typically places greater emphasis on the influence of social and political processes over what participants say about a particular feeling or experience (e.g., Braun, 2000b), and considers how talk is produced within a social context. Themes represent culturally available resources for talking about a particular topic, rather than simply being an accurate reflection of people’s psychology and lived experience.

My view of critical psychology is it should prioritise overcoming oppression and working towards a better society, and that this goal is most effectively accomplished by rejecting a strict adherence to a particular research method or theoretical approach. As Wilkinson (1997a: 183) argues ‘in the fight against oppression, feminist psychologists need to fight on all fronts, using any and every tactic which will advance our cause’. Critical psychologists occasionally lament that critical commentaries are ‘replete with calls to work to end oppression and social injustice, but short...on concrete proposals for action that might lead to social transformation’ (Sloan, 2000b: 234; see also Kitzinger, 1999). Political goals should be placed at the very heart of critical psychology, and (sometimes)

the esoteric debates which can deflect energy and attention away from pressing political and social objectives should not take centre stage. In an effort to maximise the potential of this research to make concrete suggestions for action, I adopt the perspective that ‘where critical political objectives are at stake [...] pragmatism is probably better than purism’ (Spears, 1997: 13). Spears (1997: 10) argues if ‘criticality’ is the overarching goal of psychological investigation then choosing between a relativist or realist position should not be necessary because politics should be the central issue. Placing politics at the heart of research provides a solution to the incompatibility of realist and constructionist perspectives, because either and both can be used to further political goals (Kitzinger, 1995: 155). In this thesis, I align with feminists who argue there is no distinctive feminist methodology, and that feminists should use whichever method is helpful for women rather than necessarily adhering to the contemporary orthodoxy in feminist psychology of qualitative methods being intrinsically ‘good’ (Maynard & Purvis, 1994; Miller, 1991; Wilkinson, 1986: 14). As discussed above, I place a political commitment to understand training at the centre of my research, rather than declaring allegiance to one approach throughout. Informed by my own position as a lesbian feminist, I take the view that political expediency is a better criteria to drive research. My goal is a pragmatic and political one, driven by a concern to generate knowledge which is *useful* for trainers and for lesbian and gay psychologists in advancing social change on behalf of lesbians and gay men.

In this thesis, then, I experiment with a range of different theoretical and methodological approaches. These include:

- A traditional positivist/essentialist quantitative self-report measure: homophobia scales (in Chapter 3). This approach reflects my undergraduate training in psychology, and a desire to find out what I could ‘discover’ in my LGAT data using the tools of conventional psychology. I also utilise a homophobia scale in the hope that I can add to the existing body of research which finds that training, when evaluated on this basis, is a ‘success’. I thought this approach could also provide ‘facts’ trainers may find useful when encouraging organisations to commission training.

- Thematic analyses of LGAT sessions (in Chapters 4 and 8) and thematic analysis of trainer's interview talk (in Chapter 5). My use of these reflects my growing competence in qualitative methods. I chose thematic analysis to analyse all my data pertaining to training exercises in Chapter 4. I have amassed a very large corpus of data about exercises and feel that thematic analysis will enable me to discuss a significant proportion of this, and so contextualise my more micro-analyses of the data. In Chapter 4, my goal is to map the terrain of the training process, drawing on the perspectives of all those involved, and so describe the overarching themes. I feel that a realist thematic analysis of trainers' talk, in Chapter 5, is most politically expedient, because I am keen to document the trainers' experiences and provide an analysis grounded in concrete tips, advice, and strategies which could be accessible to, and useful for (predominantly) lesbians and gay men providing training. I use thematic analysis to identify categories of questions in Chapter 8. This will foreground my fine-grained conversation analysis of three questions in the final analytic Chapter. Again, generating themes will enable me to represent fully this data set and compare and contrast what questions *really* get asked in training with the versions provided by authors of training manuals.
- (Thematic) Discursive analysis of interview data and of talk during training (in Chapters 6 and 7). These analyses reflect my training at Loughborough University in discursive psychology. I use discursive analysis to engage with the issue of what talk is 'doing' in particular contexts and the ways in which (primarily trainees') talk is constructed to achieve particular goals.
- Conversational analysis of training talk. This analysis is the most fine-grained 'micro' analysis of training in action *as* action. Using CA, in Chapter 9, will enable me to interrogate turn by turn *how* trainees' questions, and trainers' answers to them, are organized in their local sequential context.

These various approaches are founded in very different epistemological positions. Homophobia scales assume that 'attitudes' exist inside people's heads and can be 'measured'. Thematic analysis of interview talk moves away from 'measurement' but treats attitudes, beliefs and experiences as properties of individuals that can be (more or

less) accurately reported through talk. Discursive analysis problematises this ‘transparent’ approach to talk and instead treats talk as managing issues of stake and interest, or dealing with issues of ‘face’ and self-presentation, rather than as a transparent medium to underlying cognitive states (e.g., Edwards & Potter, 1992). Finally, conversation analysis treats talk as a form of action and makes use of a set of technical observations about the organisation of talk-in-interaction (related to turn-taking systems and the organisation of sequences). In the final chapter of the thesis, I reflect on the costs and benefits of the different approaches I use, and consider their value for critical psychology as a (meta) discipline.

EDUCATING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Critical psychologists, including feminist and lesbian and gay psychologists, have viewed education as a route to social change. Edmund O’Sullivan (2000: 145-146) has stressed the importance to the critical psychology project of ‘*educationally* challeng[ing] compulsory heterosexism’. As the prominent feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan (1993: 162) writes, education is ‘the time-honored, nonviolent means of social change, the alternative to revolution’. Education, in its widest sense, is viewed as essential for communicating to people – whether they be students or members of the community at large - social justice issues (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). Formal education is often seen as providing (as well as constraining) opportunities to undermine the status quo (e.g., Appleby, 1997; Epstein, 1993, 1994), and critical scholars and educators are invested in working to ‘modify’ education in order to achieve pro-justice political goals (e.g., Griffin & Andermahr, 1997). The role of adult education in effecting social change is viewed by some as a form of revolution and reform, rather than being one of merely conserving the existing social system (London & Ewing, 1982; Thomas & Harries-Jenkins, 1991): education can have a ‘liberating’ function when, for instance, it enables members of oppressed groups to realise their marginalized social position (Fletcher, 1980: 69; Freire, 1970, 1981).

From the early stages of the establishment of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual Division of the APA, the APA (through guidelines and statements of good practice) adopted an educational role in encouraging its members to work against the notion homosexuality was a mental illness (Morin & Rothblum, 1991). In confronting institutionalized heterosexism, it has been recommended that education should occur on all levels of psychological research and practice: ‘All researchers, counselors, psychotherapists, and psychoanalysts should be required to take at least one course that exposes them to alternative thinking [that is, lesbian and gay issues]’ (Sang, 1989: 95). It is widely claimed in the psychological literature that ‘personal contact and *education* are the only routes to changing...prejudicial attitudes’ (R. J. Green, 1996: 392, my emphasis; see also Herek & Glunt, 1993). A variety of programs have aimed to reduce anti-lesbian/gay attitudes: including lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) speaker panels⁹ (Croteau & Kusak, 1992; McClintock, 1992; S. Green et al., 1993; Nelson & Krieger, 1997); video presentations of positive images of lesbians and gay men (Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000); and written information about the ‘biological determinants of sexual orientation’ (Pratarelli & Donaldson, 1997: 1411). (See Chapter 3 for further discussion of such interventions.)

Diversity Training

Education about diversity issues is been widely used, and is often (but not exclusively) provided in the workplace, where it has been claimed to be a ‘major vehicle’ for providing the ‘skills necessary for successful practice’ for social workers and mental health professionals (Carrera & Rosenberg, 1973: 262). ‘Diversity appreciation’ workshops (known more often in the UK as equal opportunities courses) are a common feature of public and private sector organisations (Kiselica et al., 1999). “Diversity” is claimed to be ‘all the rage’ (Hyde, 1998: 19) and a ‘growing innovation’ (McCauley et al., 2000: 113) in the workplace. Provision of training has ‘exploded’ (Perkins Delatte & Baytos, 1995), and commentators argue that ‘business is booming’ for trainers and

⁹ A panel consists of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals who ‘share their life stories and are available to answer questions posed by students’ (Townsend & Wallick, 1996: 638).

consultants in diversity issues (Overmyer Day, 1995). A diversity workshop has been defined as ‘a small group situation in which a number of students and a group leader or facilitator discuss diversity-related issues’ (McCauley et al, 2000: 102). Diversity training is extolled – particularly in the US - for facilitating ‘the process by which a work force is educated about cultural, socio-economic, racial and religious differences among employees and taught how to embrace those differences so as to create and maintain an effective work environment’ (Lai & Kleiner, 2001: 14). Much of the literature about ‘managing diversity’ is located in occupational journals such as the *Journal of Organizational Change, Training & Development, Personnel Psychology* and so on. The rationale for this, predominantly US-derived, discussion of diversity training is improvement in employee productivity, increased employee morale, decreased labour turn-over, and harmonious working relations (Cox, 1993; Tan et al., 1996). It is also important for the worker to develop the correct “KSAs” (knowledge, skills and abilities) necessary for job performance (Goldstein, 1990).

Diversity, in this framework, is an issue for those managing organisations that employ workers with varying so-called ‘demographics’ (Tan et al., 1996: 54; Watkins, 1990). Hyde (1998: 20) refers to this model of diversity training as the ‘mainstream model’ because it assumes a level playing field between various social groupings, and she outlines an ‘alternative model’ whereby unequal distribution of power is viewed as normative in organisations and this is the focus of challenge. The ‘mainstream model’ lumps various diversity ‘issues’ (gender, race, national origin, age, geographic location, disability, education, religion, leadership style, marital/parental status) including sexual orientation into a liberal melting pot of, as Perkins Delatte and Baytos (1995: 59) put it, ‘voices contributing to the design of your program’. Within this diversity model white males are to be ‘by all means include[d]’ (Perkins Delatte & Baytos, 1995: 59), because otherwise they ‘feel over-exposed, targeted and maligned’ (Lindsay, 1994: 21). Writers argue that the ‘real spirit’ of training hinges on the individual (‘releasing people’s creativity’ Hardingham, 1996: 45) and advocate ‘argu[ing] quite persistently in some cases against a highly “political” agenda’ (p. 45). A political emphasis in training is implicitly or explicitly positioned in this literature as ‘propaganda’. Diversity training,

then, whilst being ‘all the rage’ has generally proceeded in a liberal, individualistic vein (see Bryans, 1992, for a critique of individualism in racism awareness training).

Lesbian and Gay Awareness Training

The current literature focusing on education and training about *lesbian and gay* issues is located within a diverse range of fields. The amount of literature relating to LGAT is limited (Sandfort, 2000), hence this review is necessarily brief. The majority of discussions in psychology (and the social sciences), advocating the need for education and training specifically on sexuality occur within either educational (e.g., D’Augelli, 1992; Epstein & Johnson, 1998) or professional contexts. For example in psychiatry (Townsend et al., 1995), nursing (Irwin, 1992; Gray et al., 1996) and teaching (Casper et al., 1996; Bohan, 1997). The professions which engage most with discussion of sexuality training and education are social work (e.g., Gochros, 1984; Van Soest, 1996; Burgess et al., 1997), counselling and therapy (e.g., Annesley & Coyle, 1994; Buhrke, 1989; Burke & Douce, 1991; Coyle, et al., 1999; Graham et al., 1984; Jones, 2000; Milton & Coyle, 1999; Mobley, 1998). Sexuality modules on degree courses, are an increasingly common forum for LGAT (Wells, 1991). Recent figures from the US indicate that within higher education, homosexuals and bisexuals are the third most common minority focus in workshops (77%) after African Americans and Hispanic/Latino/Latina Americans (89% and 80% respectively) (McCauley et al., 2000: 106). The prevalence of training on lesbian and gay issues in higher education and work contexts in the UK has yet to be systematically documented. John Hart, an early contributor to the ‘second wave’ (Coyle & Kitzinger, 2002) of British lesbian and gay psychology, wrote in 1981 of the need for mental health professionals to be familiarised with lesbian and gay issues and communities:

‘The professional [...] has a professional responsibility to become familiar with the ‘local scene’ so that individual befriending is not an ill-thought-out act or gesture, but rather a decision based on knowledge [...] The professional can also lend support to combat legal and social harassment, and this is a potentially new

focus to their approach to helping people; clearly training courses need to explore such unknown territory' (1981a: 133).

Many commentators on lesbian and gay awareness training are critical of the lack of attention afforded to sexuality in 'diversity' courses. Scepticism about the efficacy of generic diversity workshops appears to be commonplace. However, Myrick and Brown (1998) found from their survey of 52 US lesbian, gay and bisexual educators that half believed that diversity workshops would improve the atmosphere within their departments, the other half felt that workshops would not be beneficial (21.2%) or were unsure as to their worth (28.8%). This shows that lesbians and gay men are ambivalent about the utility of general diversity courses in improving awareness of lesbian and gay issues. Steven Clift (1988: 32) remarked nearly twenty years ago, that 'while studies of gender and multi-cultural issues in education have been major growth areas of educational research [...] the educational establishment in general, has conspicuously ignored the position of lesbian and gay people'.

Although I noted at the beginning of this chapter LGAT as a specific enterprise is likely to increase, there remains a paucity of lesbian and gay related material within equal opportunities training. As Hill (1995: 146) observes, 'equity specialists who focus on sexism, ageism, racism, and other forms of elitism ignore gay topics'. The establishment of pro-lesbian and gay education has been, and continues to be, problematic in the UK (and elsewhere). For example, Munt after establishing her course entitled 'Lesbian Literature' was advised by her University to either 'advertise the course pseudonymously, or not run it at all' (Munt, 1996: 235), and professional training for mental health professionals has been found wanting (Murphy et al., 2002; Wiederman & Sansone, 1999). Trotter and Gilchrist (1996) describe social work training in anti-discriminatory practice thus:

'Programmes intend their students to be competent in anti-racist practice *and* anti-sexist practice *and* anti-disablist practice, etc, etc. Unfortunately it is where programmes and students come to the 'etc, etc' that things get fudged. Anti-heterosexist and non-homophobic practice is generally not made explicit in the

conveniently abbreviated jargon of the anti-discriminatory practice (ADP!) discourse.’ (p. 75, emphasis in original)

Murphy (1992: 232) likewise commented that ‘gay and lesbian topics are rarely discussed within mental health graduate programs or in the field’. Teaching about lesbian and gay issues has garnered much less institutional support than training addressing other equal opportunities issues such as race (Bryans, 1992; Connolly & Troyna, 1998; Coombe & Little, 1986) and gender (Leslie & Clossick, 1996; Steele, 1987). Multicultural and anti-racist education is far more integrated into school and workplace training (Figueroa, 1991), as is training on sexism and disablism. It has been noted that a career within disability equality training is possible (Campbell & Oliver, 1996) a situation which has been, to date, unlikely in sexuality education. Legally, in the UK, workplaces are encouraged to provide equal opportunities training covering race, gender and disability, but sexuality training is far more ad hoc. This situation has not been aided by an absence of equal opportunities legislation including ‘sexual orientation’, or the assumption that ‘sexuality has no legitimate place at work’ (Martin & Collinson, 1999: 295). Overall, the quantity of discussion of lesbian and gay issues appears relatively small in sexuality, and equal opportunities courses, often being accorded one lecture (if that) (Townsend et al., 1997: 214).

Currently, the importance and need for education about lesbian and gay issues is stressed in the literature, but there is a dearth of information on *how* this should be developed. Some research does not go beyond suggesting that heterosexism hinders professionalism, and that training is an important strategy to reduce heterosexism and help professionals provide a quality service to all clients (e.g., G. B. Smith, 1993; Eliason, 1995, 1996b). There is much discussion about whether engagement with lesbian and gay issues should be considered in its own right or integrated into broader training programs (e.g., Vasquez & Eldridge, 1994; Wells, 1991). The discussion of the specific nature and content of training is (generally) limited to training manuals (e.g., Stewart, 1999). Often training manuals, which provide concrete guidelines for providing LGAT, echo the liberal, individualist assumptions embedded in commentaries about diversity training. For

instance, Zuckerman and Simons (1996: ix) write in the introduction to their manual: ‘this book does not ask people to change who they are, but it does ask them to do their part to create smoothly working relationships with others’. The emphasis is placed on valuing a diverse workforce and thus, by embracing lesbian and gay colleagues, the work environment will become a richer and more productive place for everyone. Manuals impress upon the (presumed heterosexual) reader that everyone is ‘on the same side’, do not want to offend colleagues, and have the shared goal of improving the ‘smoothness’ of working relations. The emphasis is on ‘be[ing] an effective ally in your organisation’ (Zuckerman & Simons, 1996: 58). Authors of manuals talk of the dangers of blaming the “SWUMs” (straight, white, US-born, men) for prejudice against lesbians and gay men, and stress the importance of heterosexuals ‘bridg[ing] the gaps that separate them from their gay colleagues’ (McNaught, 1997: 411).

Outside of training manuals, the literature takes a broad-brush approach to what might be included in training. This is typified by Myrick and Brown’s (1998: 303) suggestions that ‘workshops might include small group discussion of relevant LGB topics, presentations on key issues by LGB educators, and role-playing exercises that help people understand and empathize with LGB experiences’ (see also Walters & Haynes, 1998). The importance of a non-confrontational, ‘safe’, atmosphere in training is emphasised in the literature (e.g., McClintock, 1992: 53). Croteau and Kusak (1992: 397) caution against trainers providing ‘a stream of dour facts about antigay and antilesbian violence’ and opening a training course with ‘an attack against heterosexist oppression’ because, they argue, this will alienate the group and ‘elicit defensiveness or even hostility’. The literature is, to my knowledge, largely silent about the *actual* construction, design and process of LGAT.

Methods for Training and Educating Heterosexuals

The suggestions made in the literature concerning LGAT are generally based on the premise that heterosexuals’ negative views about lesbians and gay men derive from ‘stereotypes’, ‘misperceptions’, and ‘ignorance’ (e.g., Graham et al., 1984). Training and

education, it is argued, can overcome these by using three main (interconnecting) approaches. The first approach is that stereotypes and so on, can be undermined through the provision of ‘facts’ and information about lesbians and gay men. This is seen as an antidote to the ‘myths’ and ‘stereotypes’ that heterosexuals’ hold. Van de Ven (1995: 638), for example, suggests the notion that lesbians and gay men ‘have particular modes of dress, speech, appearance or mannerisms’ can be debunked by providing information that reflects the diversity of lesbian and gay lives. ‘Learning the facts’, as Messing et al. (1984: 69) put it, or providing ‘accurate and valued information’ about lesbians and gay men (Schreier, 1995: 21; Stein & Burg, 1996), are seen as crucial to foster the replacement of stereotypes with more “realistic” images.

The second approach is based on the assumption that it is important for groups to get to know lesbian and gay trainers as ‘human beings...not just gay men or lesbians’ (Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000: 128). This provides an ‘emotional component’ (Schreier, 1995: 21) to training. Personal contact with lesbians and gay men is viewed as one of the best means of reducing homophobia (Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Herek & Glunt, 1993). The idea is that ‘contact’ will improve negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men as long as it is ‘positive contact and interaction’ (Nelson & Krieger, 1997: 67), and lesbians and gay men act as ‘positive role-models’ (Messing et al., 1984: 69). Chuck Stewart (1999), an awareness trainer, attributes his ‘successful’ training to his appearance: ‘By modifying my appearance (through selective presentation), I was able to obtain positive changes in student feelings towards homosexuals’ (p. ix-x). The results of a longitudinal study which involved increasing the amount of pro-lesbian/gay information displayed on a college campus for two years showed that two elements created positive attitude change: contact with lesbians and gay men; and dialogue with lesbians and gay men (Geller, 1991, cited in Nelson & Krieger, 1997).

The third approach, based on an ‘ethnic homosexual’ (Altman, 1980) model, entails arguing that lesbian and gay men are similar to other ‘minority groups’ and this will encourage heterosexuals to take lesbian and gay concerns more seriously (Burke & Douce, 1991; Clift, 1988; Gochros, 1984; Henley & Pincus, 1978; McClintock, 1992).

Buhrke and Douce (1991: 220/222) write that ‘although some trainees may assert that dealing with lesbian and gay issues is outside the scope of their expertise and/or values, we can draw parallels to other kinds of diversity’. Thus, the three prevalent approaches for educating heterosexuals involve the provision of ‘facts’ about lesbians and gay men, contact with individual lesbians and gay men, and lesbians and gay men *as a group* being aligned with other marginalized groups.

Evaluating LGAT

Evaluations of LGAT, to date, have proceeded in the same way as most research in lesbian and gay psychology: within a conventional positivist-empiricist paradigm. Outcome measures are overwhelmingly relied upon in evaluations of LGAT. Evaluations of training’s ‘success’ have almost exclusively used two methods: post-training written evaluation forms; and pre and post training quantitative homophobia scales (see Chapter 3 for further discussion). ‘Paper-and-pencil’ written evaluations are given to participants immediately after a workshop to assesses ‘how interesting or useful participants thought the workshop was and how well prepared participants thought the leaders were’ (McCauley et al., 2000: 106). Authors then use these written evaluations and their impressions of how their teaching and training was received to comment on the success or otherwise of the intervention in question. For instance, ‘our activity appears to be an empowering springboard’ (A. Walters & Phillips, 1994); and ‘the tenor of these discussions is usually positive’ (S. Walters & Hayes, 1998: 11). Anderson (1981: 66) reported that ‘in their evaluations the students were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the workshop’. Schneider and Tremble (1986: 99) claimed that ‘the questionnaire data suggest that participants had a more positive and supportive attitude toward homosexuality after attending the workshop’.

Homophobia scales have also been extensively used to ascertain the ‘success’ of LGAT. This entails measuring an individual’s degree of ‘homophobia’ before and after an

intervention¹⁰. The criteria for success here is whether or not homophobia scores have decreased. More recent studies call for more rigorous ‘scientific’ research on the efficacy of training: ‘The job of the training analyst is to choose the most rigorous design possible’ (Goldstein, 1990: 184). Cotton-Huston & Waite (2000: 130) urge that ‘specific features of such interventions need to be tested empirically to determine the characteristics of interventions that lead to successful reduction of prejudice’. S. Green et al. (1993: 59/60) advocate future studies ‘include the use of control groups and follow-up measures’. Researchers, it is argued, ‘should exert stronger control over events which may occur between pretest and posttest’ (Pratarelli & Donaldson, 1997: 1415), concentrate on the ‘isolation...of intervention variables’ and use ‘random assignment’ (Crouteau & Kusak, 1992: 399). Outcome measures have continued to be used despite Stevenson’s (1988: 508) conclusion - based on his review of thirteen quantitative evaluations of ‘anti-homophobia’ interventions - that qualitative aspects of interventions are ‘potentially more important’ than outcome measures.

I want to create social change – a better world for lesbians and gay men - and as I have outlined education is arguably an extremely important way to achieve this. It is important for me to improve my own practice. In the ‘cut and thrust’ of training, issues concerned with furthering positive change, and developing sound arguments against heterosexism are often relegated to second or even third place. The logistics of running exercises, splitting trainees into equally sized small groups, and other practical issues such as ensuring that trainees are comfortable, have access to refreshments and so on have tended to preoccupy me. I personally feel that being active in this kind of work is a useful forum to further positive social change. Primarily, because it is one of the few contemporary opportunities that lesbians/gay men and heterosexuals have to engage ‘in dialogue’ about how lesbian and gay concerns can be recognised and instituted in the workplace. So I feel, based on how training seems to be received by trainees, that training is in some ways ‘useful’, but I do not know whether what occurs in my training sessions is anything like how other trainers conduct their training sessions, or how I can improve training. It is

¹⁰ The measurement of “attitudes” via ‘paper and pencil’ rating scales, have also focused on ‘racist’ (e.g., Modern Racism Scale, Parry, 1983), and ‘sexist’ (e.g., Attitudes towards Women Scale, Spence et al., 1973; Spence & Hahn, 1997; Glick & Fisk, 1997) attitudes.

important for me, as a trainer and as a researcher, to do more than use a quantitative outcome measure to assess the efficacy of training for two reasons. First, because outcome measures have been overly relied on in previous studies and leave training as an unexamined ‘black box’. Second, and more importantly, because I feel that examining the *process* of training in action is the research strategy most likely to illuminate whether and how training is ‘useful’ to further social change. As a critical psychologist, and a lesbian feminist trainer, I have designed my research to answer these questions.

My research aims as I outlined earlier, then, are encapsulated in the question: what happens in lesbian and gay awareness training? I address my research aims, in various ways, in the following chapters. In ‘**Chapter 2: Methods of data collection and analysis**’, I outline the methods I employ in this thesis and argue that a focus on *action* should be central to understanding the process of LGAT. I distinguish my approach from previous considerations of ‘action’, such as action research, and I introduce my ‘core’ and ‘supplementary’ data-sets.

The analytic chapters that follow are structured to increasingly focus on training in action as the thesis progresses. In ‘**Chapter 3: LGAT: The conventional approach**’, I replicate the standard format of evaluating training by using pre- and post- training homophobia scales, and the comments given on post-training written evaluation forms to assess my 13 LGAT sessions. In ‘**Chapter 4: Training Exercises: How do they work, and what do they achieve?**’, I look across all of my data-sets to provide a thematic analysis of five exercises commonly used in my LGAT sessions. I focus on exercises, in part, to provide a broad contextualised introduction to the data, as exercises form the bulk of what occurs in the training data. I explicate how these exercises ‘work’ from the perspective of trainers and trainees, and by examining how they get ‘played out’ in situ. I also provide some preliminary recommendations for the improvement of training.

‘**Chapter 5: Pitfalls in Training: The trainers’ perspective**’, focuses on 16 trainers’ views about their experiences of providing training, the pitfalls they encounter in training and their strategies for overcoming them. I treat the interview-data as a ‘true’ reflection

of trainers' thoughts, feelings and perceptions about training. In **'Chapter 6: 'No one can legislate changes in our hearts and souls: Trainees' "evaluate" training'**, I provide a discursive analysis of themes about attitude and behaviour change in the trainees' post-training interview data. I explore some of the ways that trainees 'account' for their attitudes and behaviour towards lesbians and gay men. I conclude this chapter by discussing the implications of my analysis for training and how training would proceed if trainees recommendations were implemented. In **'Chapter 7: Mundane Heterosexism: A discursive approach'**, I analyse ways in which heterosexism is managed in (primarily) trainees' talk. My analysis coheres around three themes: 1) 'prejudice against the heterosexual'; 2) 'non-heterosexuality as a deficit'; and 3) 'refusing diversity'. I argue that feminist and lesbian and gay psychologists should focus on subtle manifestations of heterosexism produced within a liberal framework. Chapters 8 and 9 look at the questions that trainees asked trainers in the training sessions. In **'Chapter 8: Question Themes in Lesbian and Gay Awareness Training'**, I identify six themes in the questions asked by trainees and demonstrates some of the differences between the way training manuals represent questions and answers and how questions *actually* occur in training. The final analytic chapter, **'Chapter 9, Difficult Questions: A conversation analytic perspective'**, uses the tools of conversation analysis to examine how three difficult questions unfolded in the local sequential organisation of training. This chapter contributes to the growing literature that uses conversational analysis to develop more politically engaged research. The concluding chapter, **'Chapter 10, Discussion and Conclusions'**, provides a summary of the thesis overall, outlines the contributions and implications and limitations of the thesis, and discusses future directions for research on training.

Chapter 2

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Introduction

The term ‘method’ originally meant ‘the way to the goal’ (Kvale, 1996: 179), and this thesis employs a number of ways to the goal of understanding LGAT. Feminist researchers are strong advocates of methodological pluralism in the pursuit of social change (Ussher, 1999). Multi-methods are increasingly employed in qualitative and feminist research, which allows us to access various “views” of our object of study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 3). I use five methods of data collection in this thesis: tape-recordings of ‘live’ LGAT sessions in action (the ‘core’ data set because of my primary focus on action), interviews with trainers and participants, field notes on training sessions, pre- and post- training homophobia scales completed by trainees, and post-training evaluation forms completed by trainees (these are all ‘supplementary’ data sets). This chapter is divided into three parts. First, I present the case for studying action and discuss observational and action research. Second, I outline my methods of data collection, and third, I discuss my methods of data analysis.

THE CASE FOR STUDYING ACTION

My key method of data collection, the one I highlight as distinctive in this thesis, is observation of LGAT (used in Chapters 4, 7, 8 and 9). Lesbian and gay psychology, to date, has been reliant on forms of *reported* action. The primary methods for data collection are: surveys (e.g., Kurdeck’s [1994] survey of relationship satisfaction among lesbian and gay and heterosexual couples); checklists and questionnaires (e.g., Patterson’s [1994] assessment of the adjustment of the children of lesbian mothers); case histories (e.g., Shuster’s [1987] case histories of bisexual women); self-reflection (e.g., Brown’s [1984] reflection on the relationship between lesbian therapist and her community); focus groups (e.g., Ellis’s [2001a] analysis of how students in focus group discussion talk about lesbian and gay human rights); or (either qualitative or quantitative) interview studies (e.g., Tasker’s & Golombok’s [1997] longitudinal study of children

growing up in lesbian and gay households). Ken Plummer (1998: 612) has called for lesbian and gay research to return to examining ‘the concrete living social worlds of lesbians and gay men’ (Plummer, 1998: 605; also Weston, 1998). My use of LGAT sessions in action expands the repertoire of methods available in lesbian and psychology. Kitzinger (2000a, 2000b) outlines an action oriented research agenda for lesbian and gay psychology, because, for instance, reports of a phenomenon (such as ‘coming out’) may be radically different from instances of the phenomenon itself (lesbians and gay men *actually* ‘coming out’ in interaction with others).

Although the current emphasis within psychology in general – and lesbian and gay psychology in particular – is on collecting secondary reports of social action, there is a long tradition of *observing* social actions within psychology (and the social sciences) (Mason, 1996: 60; Paradis, 1981). A focus on action is quintessentially tied to methods of observation as these allow actions in the social world to be ‘captured’ for analysis, and enable the transformation of ‘the pedestrian into the intriguing’ (Huntingford, 1985, quoted in Kellehear, 1993: 126). I now outline three traditions of observing social action: (i) mainstream psychological observation; (ii) ethnographic and feminist observation; and (iii) unobtrusive methods.

a) Observing Social Action

(i) Mainstream Psychological Observation

Systematic observation developed in the context of experimental psychology: the researcher creates and manipulates a social situation and then acts as an omnipotent detached observer of it (J. Wilkinson, 2000). A considerable number of classic psychological studies have used this type of observation to formulate their theories about human behaviour (e.g., Asch, 1955; Bandura, 1962; Milgram, 1974; Piaget, 1954; Zimbardo, 1969). Structured observational coding schemes have been developed within traditional positivist-empiricist research, with the aim of objectively classifying group behaviour (Miller, 1987). These entail the researcher deciding in advance which behaviours in the (often contrived) social setting are of interest, and then noting the

occurrence and frequency of the “target” behaviours. Bales’ (1950; Bales et al., 1951) ‘observational coding method’, for example, generated a social psychological research tradition centred on quantifying specific group behaviours. Group behaviours are categorised under - based on the researcher’s assessment of them as they are occurring - headings such as, ‘active, dominant, talks a lot’ or ‘entertaining, sociable, smiled, warm’ (Bales, 1950: 7). Bales’ coding scheme is lauded as a particularly scientifically reliable and valid technique. However, the ontological and epistemological problems of coding schemes go beyond merely ‘deflect[ing] attention away from uncategorized activities’ (Silverman, 2001: 67). Physical movements (i.e., a smile) are conflated with the interpretation of behaviours (i.e., degree of ‘warmth’) within the same coding categories. Making real time, in situ, assessments within the parameters of these multifaceted categories would be complex, and (inevitably) involve the researcher’s interpretation of behaviour.

Silverman (2001: 66) provides a useful example of the problems inherent in attempting to code events as they occur. As part of his ‘outpatient coding form’ for documenting doctor-patient interaction, he asked ‘Does doctor invite questions?’ The schedule is then divided into two forced choice responses: ‘no’ and ‘yes: when?’. This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, deciding what constitutes the ‘invitation’ of a question is rather problematic (as is deciding what constitutes a question, see Chapters 8 & 9), and would not necessarily involved the doctor saying something like ‘have you any questions?’ From a conversation analytic stance, dislocating questions from their interactional sequence is profoundly troubling as *context* is constructed through interaction, and it is argued, the relevance of context should not be selectively decided on the basis of the analyst’s criteria (Heritage, 1984). Hence, the researcher answering the question on the coding schedule, even within its own limited parameters, is not as straightforward as it initially appears. Second, the subtlety and speed of the question invitation phenomenon would not allow any understanding of the *meaning* of inviting a question for the doctor, the patient, or the researcher. Without knowing the content of the ‘invitation’ (and possible subsequent question) it would be impossible to generate an analytic understanding of the meaning of the event.

(ii) Ethnographic and Feminist Observation

‘Naturalistic’ observational research has a long history within the social sciences (particularly sociology and cultural anthropology), beginning with participant observations of non-Western societies by early anthropologists (e.g., Malinowski’s 1922, case study of the Western Pacific Trobriand Islanders¹). The emphases in ethnographic observation (frequently participant observation) are on exploring the nature of actual social phenomena, providing an in-depth analysis of a small number of cases, and interpreting the meanings and function of actions (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994: 248; Whyte, 1943; Wolcott, 1994). Laud Humphreys’ *Tearoom Trade* is a classic example of covert observational research². Humphreys’ role as ‘watchqueen’ enabled him to observe men engaging in sex in public toilets. Notwithstanding ethical objections to his data collection procedure, this approach enabled him to discover the aphrodisiacal effect of danger: ‘during the attack on the restroom by teen-age toughs...I observed three acts of fellatio’ (Humphreys, 1975: 151). His research also revealed that a large proportion of men who ‘cottage’ (solicit for and have anonymous sex in public toilets) were ‘currently or previously married men’ (Clinard & Meier, 1998: 372)³. It is highly unlikely these findings would have been obtained using self-report measures, such as questionnaires or interviews.

Observational studies are crucial in qualitative research (Mason, 1996; Silverman, 2001; Wolcott, 1994), both within mainstream research (especially within education, Hammersley, 1990: 5), and feminist enquiry (Nielsen, 1990; Reinharz, 1992: 46-75). Ethnography⁴ has been described as ‘the most basic form of social research’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 2), and the literature discussing feminist observational

1 See Annette Weiner (1976, discussed in Reinharz, 1992: 48) for a feminist critique of the male bias in cultural anthropology.

2 The ‘canonized’ ethnographies of Laud Humphreys and William Foote Whyte have been criticised for being focused on male-dominated settings and male behaviours (Reinharz, 1992: 54).

3 This ‘fact’ is rhetorically deployed by LGAT trainers to undermine the association between gay men and anal sex.

4 Of course, ethnography encompasses much more than (participant) observation and generally includes in-depth interviews with key informants and documentary evidence, providing a theoretical as well as methodological approach. However, for the purposes of this overview I am focusing on observation.

research generally uses ethnographic principles to focus on women's lived experiences (Cook & Fonow, 1986/1990; Dyck, 1993; Gelsthorpe, 1992; Ramazanoglu, 1992; Stanley & Wise, 1983; Williams, 1992). There have been a relatively large number of feminist and lesbian ethnographies (e.g., Wolf, 1979). An early example is Susan Krieger's ethnography of a lesbian community with whom she lived for a year. Based on her field work she writes: 'The outside world invaded, felt Allison...Like she'd heard a woman say, "I'm not going in that bathroom alone". She wouldn't grab a woman like that. They thought they were irresistible, straight people' (Krieger, 1983: 162). Her ethnography shares characteristics typical of such research: her account has a fictional quality; and she writes 'through the eyes' of her participants in a loosely conversational style. Her writing blends her own and – in this case - Allison's perspective on the situation, making the two positions inextricable (Christman, 1988). Thus the 'naturalism' of ethnographic observation has generated criticism: "'just hanging out" with the aim of faithfully representing subjects' worlds is a convenient myth' (Silverman, 2001: 72).

(iii) Unobtrusive Methods

Unobtrusive methods developed from concerns about 'reactivity': 'natural' behaviours being 'distorted' by the participant researcher. These methods aim to be inconspicuous, and avoid 'disturb[ing] the social environment' (Kellehear, 1993: 2; Bouchard, 1976). Simple observation (meaning the researcher 'does not intervene in the production of the material'), forms part of a repertoire⁵ of unobtrusive methods (Webb et al., 1966: 115). An early simple observational study of language was Moore's (1922) research examining sex differences in conversation: 'Moore slowly walked up Broadway from 33rd Street to 55th Street about 7:30 every night for several weeks. He jotted down every bit of audible conversation and eventually collected 174 fragments' (quoted in Webb et al., 1996: 129). We can see from this description that the study relied upon: (a) the researcher remaining inconspicuous; and (b) 'fragments' of conversation being 'jotted down' by the researcher.

⁵ Researchers, for instance, have assessed obedience to signs prohibiting graffiti by counting the number of messages scrawled on the signs themselves (Fetterman, 1989: 68-72). This is an example of an accretion trace measure, i.e., the build-up of a product or residue. Erosion measures, by contrast, measure the amount of deterioration or wear. For example, the pattern of wear of the carpet around a particular museum exhibit.

Despite the value of ‘simple’ observation in focusing on social action *and* minimising reactivity, the approach has been ‘relatively neglected’ (Robson, 1993: 269).

My approach to observation is more akin to ethnographic, feminist and ‘simple’ observation, than the principles of coding and quantifying the social world at source typifying mainstream psychological observation. However, it departs from them in avoiding a heavy reliance on field notes (which can create impressionistic observations completely filtered through the researcher’s agenda), in favour of tape-recordings of training which allow the *actual* action to be examined in-depth.

b) Action Research

My focus on action implies my research is ‘action research’. Within an action research framework the two goals of social research and social change are intertwined and mutually shaping (Biddle & Anderson, 1991; Breakwell, 1990; Lewin, 1946). Action research is often participative, cyclical, and claims to ‘reconstruct both practical expertise and theoretical insight on the basis of its own inquiry procedures’ (Winter, 1987, quoted in Sarantakos, 1998: 7; Kolb, 1984; Robson, 1993). There are four main types of action research, known as: participatory action research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989); action science; soft systems methodology; and evaluation research (Dick, 1997; see also Scriven, 1991). Feminist researchers, in particular, have utilized participatory strands of action research (Maguire, 1987; Lather, 1989), and problematised the (false) dichotomy between research and practice. There are elements of ‘action research’ in my research, but also significant departures from a (feminist) action research paradigm, with respect to: first, how ‘action’ is conceptualised and my investment in an iterative research process; and second the degree of informant participation in the research process.

First, although I focus on social action, my process of data collection was not cyclical: the LGAT sessions were not designed for research purposes within an action-reflection-action framework. In other words, action within ‘action research’ equals implementing practical change based on (tentative) research findings during the research process, whilst

my focus on action entails *collecting* social action, i.e., LGAT sessions. This is not to suggest that I am not interested in social change on behalf of lesbians and gay men – quite the reverse – rather change in action is not constructed within the *research* process. Second, participatory action research aims to be a democratic endeavour that undermines the division between the researcher and the researched (Willig, 1999a: 7). Feminist action research especially, aims to empower participants by involving them in the interactive production of knowledge (Reinharz, 1992). Adopting this stance regarding LGAT would be antithetical to my theoretical and political position. Rather, I align with the position Kelly et al. (1994: 38) outline for researching men: ‘in this context the ‘empowerment’ of research participants is not and indeed should not be our goal’.

In sum, so far, I have explored various approaches to observing social action, delineated ‘action research’ and differentiated my observation of action from existing approaches.

DATA COLLECTION

Core Data Set⁶

My core data set consists of 14 (tape-recorded) LGAT sessions, to which trainees had already been recruited⁷. The LGAT sessions were ‘natural’ social situations, which would have occurred regardless of the presence or absence of myself as a researcher, and

⁶ This central emphasis on the LGAT sessions was not originally my intention. Initially, all the types of data collected were viewed as equally valuable, but the research enterprise has led me to increasingly appreciate the significance and worth of naturally occurring talk.

⁷ Two sessions (LGAT 6 and the equal opportunities forum LGAT), were initiated by myself. I approached the head of Staff Development at the University and suggested that training addressing sexuality was incorporated into the staff development programme. Those who signed up for the training knew at this point the training was to be tape-recorded. However, the sessions themselves did not differ from the other LGAT data in their content or delivery.

it was emphasised that the course content would not be altered. Informed consent was obtained from all the trainees and course organisers prior to tape-recording (see Appendix A for sample consent form). There is evidence that the effect of the presence of an observer may erode over time (Deutsch, 1949, cited in Webb et al., 1966: 113). Moreover, in many sessions I did not adopt a ‘researcher’ role, rather I was facilitating sessions so my role was that of ‘trainer’. Trainees (sometimes) commented on the evaluation form that they had quickly forgotten about the tape-recorder, so the effects of the presence of tape recorders appeared to dissipate over time (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 159). I have facilitated many more LGAT sessions than those recorded for the purpose of analysis, and have noticed no substantive change in the content of trainees’ talk or the manner in which they talk.

Table 2.1 (below) provides details of the core data set. The 14 sessions were collected over a period of two and a half years - between December 1998 and June 2001 -, and contained a total of 170 trainees. Thirteen of these sessions were audio taped (one was also video-taped, LGAT9), and during LGAT10 field notes were made during the session. One session run with LGB people was excluded because this session was very different, but the numbering includes it as LGAT8, hence my data set is actually LGAT 1-7 and LGAT 9-15. The overall length of training including breaks, and in some cases lunch, is 54 hours. Of these, 35 hours (approx.) are captured on audiotape. Of the 14 training sessions nine are co-facilitated (by both a lesbian and a gay man), three have only a gay male trainer and two have only a lesbian trainer. The mean number of trainees per group was twelve (range 3-24).

Table 2.1: Overview of Core Data Set

Session (date)	Occupational Group	No. Trainees	Length of training	Trainer(s)
LGAT 1 (08.12.98)	Social Workers	17	3 hours	Ben
LGAT 2 (20.04.99)	Clinical Psychologists	17	1 day (7 hours)	Andy Emma
LGAT 3 (13.10.99)	NHS direct group 1	10	2 hours	Ben Niki
LGAT 4 (13.10.99)	NHS direct group 2	9	2 hours	Ben Niki

LGAT (18.10.99)	5	MA Social Work students	9	1 day (7 hours)	Daniel
LGAT (24.11.99)	6	Wardens & Sub-wardens	14	2 hours	Ben Niki
LGAT (31.01.00)	7	Residential Social Workers	8	1 day (6.5 hours)	Simon Niki
LGAT	8	LGB Students	-----	-----	-----
LGAT (08.07.00)	9	Youth Workers	24	3 hours	Simon Niki
LGAT (12.09.00)	10	Police Officers	12	1 day (7 hours)	Stuart
LGAT (30.09.00)	11	Foster carers	3	4 hours	Niki
LGAT (04.11.00)	12	Youth Workers	21	3 hours	Simon Niki
LGAT (26.04.01)	13	Police Officers	5	2.5 hours	Niki
LGAT (14.06.01)	14	Voluntary Service Workers	5	2.5 hours	Niki Greg
LGAT (23.06.01)	15	Youth Workers	16	2.5 hours	Simon Niki

The 13 tape-recorded sessions resulted in 470 pages of single-spaced orthographic transcript. We can see that I (pseudonym Niki) facilitated or co-facilitated 10 sessions and my role as trainer often generated the opportunity to tape-record sessions⁸. When training I deviated from the ethnographic premise that researchers ‘must strenuously avoid feeling “at home”’, because my primary undertaking was often the business of providing training (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 102). Table 2.2 (below) provides the demographic data available for 164 of the trainees in these sessions. We can see from Table 2.2 that slightly more than half the trainees were women (64.60%), and the majority were white (84.18%) and heterosexual (90.54%). The age range of participants was broad, the mean age was thirty.

Table 2.2: Demographic Characteristics⁹ of Core Data Trainees (Frequencies and percentages [n= 164])

⁸ I strongly differentiate between my role as a researcher/analyst and as a training facilitator. I construe the latter role as a training participant.

⁹ The figures do not necessarily amount to 164, because the totals vary by category. 161 participants gave their sex, 159 age, 158 ‘race’, and only 148 gave their sexuality. Interestingly, 2 participants stated their sexuality was ‘normal’, one wrote that she was ‘not gay’, and another wrote ‘strictly men’. Three participants referred to themselves as ‘straight’, and one man said he was heterosexual ‘so far’.

Sex (%)		'Race'/Ethnicity (%)			Age (mean)	Sexuality (%)			
Female	Male	Black	Asian	White		Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Heterosexual
104 (64.6)	57 (35.4)	19 (12.03)	6 (3.80)	133 (84.18)	30 (range 18-55)	8 (5.41)	1 (0.68)	5 (3.38)	134 (90.54)

NB: The homophobia scales study excludes LGAT13, 14, 15 and includes two additional LGATs (EO training forum, 20.01.00, n=7, and Police Officers, 10.10.00, n= 8), which are not part of the core data set. However, there are no significant differences between the above demographic characteristics, and those in the homophobia scales study (see Chapter 3).

The content of these sessions were determined by the trainer(s), guided by pedagogic goals and not my research interests. All sessions were similar in content, but LGAT2 was least structured and LGAT5 was most didactic: containing a multiple choice quiz, and the 'smartie' or 'race' game (see Morjaria, 1999: 27-29). The bulk of training consisted of engaging groups in exercises (see Chapter 4, for further discussion of exercises). In three sessions (LGAT10, 13, 14) there was a legally and socially acceptable exercise, which entailed trainees discussing whether certain issues (such as getting married) were legally and/or socially acceptable for heterosexuals, gay men and lesbians. In six sessions trainees were asked either what they would liked to get out of the session (LGAT7, 11, 15), and/or in a closing round, what they had learned from the training (LGAT13, 14, 15). In addition, eight sessions contained, at the start, definitions of homophobia and heterosexism. Videos of young people talking about their experiences ('Living Proof' [North Derbyshire Health Association, 1999]) were played and discussed in two sessions (LGAT7, 11). I draw on my core data set in Chapters 4, 7, 8 and 9.

Supplementary Data Sets

(i) Interviews with Trainers

More conventionally, I collected interview data from trainers and trainees (primarily used in Chapters 4, 5 and 6). First, interviews with trainers. There were eight trainers across the core data set, six of whom were interviewed (I include as 'interview' tape-recorded data in which I, as a trainer, was talking about my training experiences with my PhD supervisor, or with other trainers). I also interviewed a further 10 trainers (whose training sessions I did *not* observe), such that 16 trainers were interviewed in total. Most of the trainers were interviewed only once. However a post-training interview was conducted

with Emma, and two post-training interviews were conducted with Simon (one of which discussed a particular element of a previous training session). This interview corpus was collected over (nearly) a two-year period, from November 1998 to October 2000. Interviews averaged one hour in length. Four of the trainers were interviewed, for convenience, over the telephone. The impact of different modes of interviewing is likely to be slight. A meta-analysis of 31 studies comparing the quantity and quality of the data from telephone and face-to-face interviews, found only small difference between in terms the amount of information elicited (de Leeuw & van der Zouwen, 1988). However, interviewees may be more frank over the telephone (Breakwell, 1990: 84).

All of the interviews were audio taped and transcribed orthographically in their entirety, which resulted in 400 pages of single-spaced transcript. Aside from trainers in the core data set, trainers were recruited opportunistically, using my existing networks and snowball sampling - a commonly used form of sampling in lesbian and gay research (e.g., Kitzinger, 1987). All of the interviewees were white, aged between 26 and 55, all but one were able-bodied, and all defined their sexuality as lesbian, gay or bisexual. They had a wide range of experience of conducting LGAT (ranging from 1 to 20 years) and the groups they trained included: social/ youth workers, probation officers, nurses, police staff, academics, students, council workers, trade union staff, housing workers, teachers, psychologists and therapists. Table 2.3 (below) indicates the pseudonym of the trainers and their allocated trainer code. The trainer code indicates the trainer's gender because many of sessions were co-facilitated by both lesbian and gay male trainers (MT for male trainer and FT for female trainer). The trainers have been allocated a number for clarity when they feature in data extracts alongside trainees.

Table 2.3: Trainer and Trainer Code across Core Data Set

Session	Pseudonym	Trainer Code ¹⁰
LGAT 1	Ben	MT 1
LGAT 2	Andy, Emma	MT 8, FT 6
LGAT 3	Ben, Niki	MT 1, FT 1
LGAT 4	Ben, Niki	MT 1, FT 1

¹⁰ Trainer codes do not correspond to their respective LGAT session as they reflect the chronological order trainers were interviewed.

LGAT 5	Daniel	MT 5
LGAT 6	Ben, Niki	MT 1, FT 1
LGAT 7	Simon, Niki	MT 4, FT 1
LGAT 9	Simon, Niki	MT 4, FT 1
LGAT 10	Stuart ¹¹	MT 12
LGAT 11	Niki	FT 1
LGAT 12	Simon, Niki	MT 4, FT1
LGAT 13	Niki	FT 1
LGAT 14	Greg, Niki	MT 11, FT 1
LGAT 15	Simon, Niki	MT 4, FT 1
<i>Other trainers</i>	Sam Ron Dee Emily Phil Katie Saul Lou Anthony Zac	MT 2 MT 3 FT 2 FT 3 MT 6 FT 4 MT 7 FT 5 MT 9 MT 10

Interviewing is a hugely popular method of qualitative data collection (Breakwell, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In fact, psychologists tend to be ‘wedded’ to them (Wetherell, 2001: 383), and estimates suggest 90% of social science research draws upon interview data (Briggs, 1986; cited in Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 1). It has been argued that interviews are ‘a construction site for knowledge’ (Kvale, 1996: 14), and have been dubbed ‘the paradigmatic “feminist method”’ (Kelly, 1990, quoted in Kelly et al., 1994: 34). In interviewing trainers my goal was to explore their experiences of training, generally without reference to specific sessions. (The exceptions were Emma and Andy who were interviewed with respect to LGAT2, and second interviews conducted with Simon relating to LGAT9 and 7).

Oakley (1981: 50) found during her interviews with women about becoming mothers, that nearly three quarters of her interviewees felt they had been affected by the interviews. Similarly, self-understanding became apparent during the trainers’ interviews. Trainers often commented, for example, that the interview was the first context in which they had discussed their training or reflected on their practice in-depth. Finch (1984)

¹¹ Stuart and Greg are the only trainers in the core data set who were not interviewed.

suggests that interviews with women should be non-hierarchical, and this was a position I adopted with trainers – usually deferring to their greater training experience and presenting myself as an inquiring ‘novice’ trainer – in order to give them ‘voice’ (Ribbens, 1989). I assumed that the material that trainers drew upon would be ‘faithful to [their] subjectively meaningful experience’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 28). My (explicit) identities as a lesbian and as a trainer were crucial to both the process of these interviews, and the formulation of questions. There was a heightened ‘intersubjective understanding’ (May, 1997: 115) between the trainers, and myself which was both advantageous and disadvantageous. My status “allowed” potentially difficult questions to be asked. For instance: ‘Is there any difference between the way you feel about your sexuality personally, and what you’re willing to present in a training session?’ (see Box 2.1 below). This question could be interpreted as threatening in another context, for example, if the interviewee felt that the interviewer had stereotypical views of lesbians and gay men. However, my ‘insider’ statuses created shared implicit knowledge, which required a disruption of the flow of conversation to be made explicit because people often fail to discuss what is taken for granted (Breakwell, 1990: 86). As I was interested in trainers’ *reasons* for adopting particular strategies or arguments in training, I needed to use numerous probes to encourage trainers to discuss this because they assumed I already ‘knew’ why they approached training in the ways they did.

Box 2.1: Trainer Interview Schedule

1. You do LGAT, tell me about it?

How did you first get involved in it? What was your first experience of doing lesbian and gay awareness training like? What sorts of groups have you done training with in the past? Why those particular groups?

2. Have you found that it (LGAT) has changed over time?

Have you changed? the groups? society? In what ways? Are organisations who ask for training similar? Has the context of training changed (e.g. specifically for a lesbian and gay course/voluntary organisations, or as part of equal opportunities training)?

3. What do you hope to achieve in doing lesbian and gay awareness training? Why?

Are your aims personal?, professional?, more like training goals? aims for the organisations you do training for?, What do you want to get across to group members? How do you achieve this?, Are you successful in achieving this?

- Underlying questions to bear in mind: Do you see LGAT as a means of changing individuals and/or society? Why? or why not? Do you aim to change people's attitudes and/or behaviour as a result of training? Why? In what ways? Why not?

4. What sorts of attitudes/prejudices/bigotry or homophobia come up during training?

Can you give some specific examples of the issues that arise? How do they typically come up? Is there anything about you/your material/the nature of the group that trigger particular issues? Has there been any change in issues/or the way issues are expressed over time? How do you deal with them? Can you give me an example? Why do you address them in the ways you do?

5. What sort of material do you use to address lesbian and gay issues?

How does the material you use open up or frame particular issues? Why?

6. Tell me about a time when something went really well, you handled a situation well and you felt good about it?

7. Tell me about a time when something went really badly, you didn't handle it well and you felt awful?

8. How does it feel for you as a person to be doing this kind of training?

9. How do you think your own sexual identity informs and affects the training you do?

10. How do you present your sexual identity to group participants?

Is there any difference between the way you feel about your sexuality personally and what you're willing to present in a training session? Why? or why not? How is it different? Do you consider questions of personal self-presentation e.g. clothes, hair, piercings, make-up etc. How? Why? What sorts of images of lesbians and gay men do you present? Why? How?

11. What concerns or problems do you have with LGAT?

12. How do you see LGAT developing in the future?

13. Is there anything else you want to add? Is there anything I haven't covered?

We can see from Box 2.1 that the interviews were guided by questions and prompts, although emphasis was placed on the free flow of 'conversation'. The interviews were designed to be both exploratory and descriptive, and following Kvale (1996) the schedule was developed starting with broad questions that would yield large amounts of rich, spontaneous data. During the interviews there was generally good 'rapport', and trainers related to me with the knowledge that I was "on side". On a few occasions I encouraged trainers to expand on points by playing 'devils advocate'. This was (often) met with a frosty reception. In the extract below, taken from an interview with Sam, I attempted to 'provoke' him into providing a thorough justification for LGAT. We join the interview after I have already asked the question about problems with LGAT off my interview schedule, and have received the minimal response 'No'.

- EP: Yeah yeah okay so you don't kind of see that there is any problems with doing that sort of stuff [training], harping on about it
- Sam: You've put the question another way that's okay.
- EP: I mean is it enough to be doing lesbian and gay awareness training.
- Sam: Yeah yeah I mean cos I think we talked before about actually it's fine changing legislation [...but] it's about actually getting it at grass roots level in in the general public
- EP: Yeah.
- Sam: Get the attitude right as well.

We can see in this extract that me saying 'harping on' was not interpreted by Sam as a 'genuine' question. His response caused me to rephrase (repair) the initial negative appraisal of LGAT, and reframe it in a positive light by positing whether training was 'enough' to undermine heterosexism and homophobia. Interestingly, the end of Sam's response to the reformulated question stresses getting 'the attitude right' which contrasts with his rejection of the 'attitude' implicit in the initial phrase I use ('harping on'). I was intending to paraphrase the sentiments of some anti-lesbian/gay spokespeople, but Sam responded in a manner suggesting that *I* held that view (c.f. the interactional maintenance of 'neutrality' in news interviews, Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Throughout the trainer interviews I took 'advantage of the growing stockpile of background knowledge' (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 46), by incorporated information from earlier interviews into later interviews, in order to follow new lines of questioning. The clearest example of this was my use of divergent trainer perspectives about the amount of sex gay men have. Daniel, an early interviewee, described an 'assimilationist' view of gay male promiscuity, i.e., he emphasised that gay men and heterosexuals are *equally* promiscuous. Daniel discussed that when training, he aimed to debunk notions of gay male promiscuity and stress that heterosexuals 'put it about a quite a bit'. I later put this position to Anthony (Ant) in interview, who responded very differently:

- EP: He [Daniel] was saying "well y'know research suggests that overall that that straight people are actually y'know more promiscuous than gay people"
- Ant: Rubbish!
- EP: And that was his position on it, and that was kind of presented as a fait accompli y'know

- Ant: Well I don't know where he gets that research from [...] by and large more gay men have much higher proportions of sexual partners than straight men do [...]
- EP: Yeah, and in training would you be presenting this diversity?
- Ant: Yeah
- EP: To people in groups yeah yeah I mean that's very different to this chap yesterday [Daniel] who was who'd got very kind of sort of
- Ant: I think there are some people who take a very assimilationist view
- EP: Mm [...]
- Ant: And I'm not I'm not into saying "we're just the same as you" I think I'm saying "we're different we, are equal"
- EP: Yes
- Ant: But we're different".

We can see from Anthony's critical response that re-introducing prior interviewees' positions encouraged a saturation to occur throughout the interview data collection period, regarding specific training styles and approaches.

(ii) Interviews with Trainees

There were 170 trainees across the core data set (177 including the EO Forum session). Using non-random selection methods based on my workload, the geographical location of participants, my assessment of their likelihood of agreeing to be interviewed, and whether they were still present at the end of the session, I invited 70 trainees to be interviewed after attending training (i.e., 39.55% of the core data set plus the EO forum). Those I asked to be interviewed attended LGAT2, 6, 7 and 9 (plus the further EO forum with university staff). Table 2.4 provides details of the trainees interviewed.

Table 2.4: Trainee Interviewees across core data set

Session	Trainee (pseudonym)	Profession / Position
LGAT 1	-----	
LGAT 2	Geraldine	Clinical Psychologist
LGAT 3	-----	
LGAT 4	-----	
LGAT 5	-----	
LGAT 6	Bernie, Tom, James, Bill, Ann, Matthew	1 Staff Development, 2 Lecturers/Wardens 3 PostGrads/ SubWardens
LGAT 7	Lauren	Residential Social Worker
LGAT 9	Janine, Donna, Rachel, Sharon	Youth Workers (part-time)
LGAT 10	-----	
LGAT 11	-----	

LGAT 12	-----	
LGAT 13	-----	
LGAT 14	-----	
LGAT 15	-----	
<i>Other LGAT</i> (EO group)	Darren, Ian, Beryl, Lynn	1 Lecturer, 2 Staff Members, 1 Lab. Technician

The interviewees cannot be claimed to be representative of all the trainees. The response rate for those invited to be interviewed was 22.86%, so the 16 interviews represent approximately a quarter of those asked to take part. The overall number of trainee interviewees from the possible 170 was low (9.04%). It is difficult to ascertain why more did not agree to be interviewed: plausible reasons for declining interview could be demanding time commitments; or lack of interest in the topic. Ten of the 16 trainees interviewed were based at the university where this research was conducted. Nine of the interviewees were women, fifteen were white (Lauren was the only Black interviewee), and all of the interviewees were able-bodied. Six interviewees were in their 20s, four were in their 30s, two were in their 40s, and four were in their 50s. All identified their sexuality as heterosexual, except Rachel who was bisexual. These interviews were conducted during a one-year period, from May 1999 to August 2000. All the interviews were audio taped, and lasted on average an hour. They were transcribed orthographically in full, which resulted in 332 pages of single-spaced transcript. Box 2.2 (below) provides the trainee interview schedule.

Box 2.2: Trainee Interview Schedule

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1. | What prompted you to come along to the training?
What did you want to get out of the session? Was the training how you expected it to be? |
| 2. | What did you learn from the session? |
| 3. | What were the trainers trying to achieve? Were they successful? |
| 4. | What did you think about the language exercise?
Were you surprised by any of the terms? |
| 5. | How did it feel discussing sexuality in that context? |
| 6. | What did you most enjoy about the session? |
| 7. | What did you least enjoy about the session? |
| 8. | What did you get out of the session? |
| 9. | Will the training affect your work in any way? |
| 10. | How do you think the trainer's sexuality affected the course? |
| 11. | What concerns/problems do you have with training? |
| 12. | Is there anything you want to add/ anything I haven't covered? |

The questions were designed to obtain as much specific information about the training they attended as possible (Kvale, 1996: 145), and I gave interviewees a verbal précis of their training session to act as an aide memoir. Often these interviews were conducted a while after the training (up to one month), therefore trainees often talked more widely about lesbian and gay issues. The interview schedule was followed flexibly, and following Kvale (1996: 158), I was not overly concerned about leading questions because they were useful for developing a dynamic interactional flavour to the interviews. I adopted the view that these interviews were ‘an interpersonal drama with a developing plot’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 16), so being ‘provocative’ by using so-called leading questions helped the plot unfold.

What became apparent during these interviews was that interviewees were concerned about being perceived as ‘homophobic’, and were often tentative in their assessments of training – perhaps because I was commonly also a facilitator of their session (see also Chapter 6). This was possibly exacerbated by my role, in these interviews, as an ‘active’ interviewer; that is one which ‘activates narrative production’ from the interviewees (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 39; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). During these interviews I often interjected my views about the mutually familiar sessions: an approach dubbed ‘talking back’ (Griffin, 1990). Approaching the interviews in this way (may or) may not have been productive. ‘Self-disclosure’ has been described by some as a ‘thorny issue’ (King, 1996: 180). In some interviews I was aware of still ‘acting’ like a trainer – educating, ‘correcting’ and challenging the respondents’ views – and generally acting in a manner antithetical to ‘collaborative’ research (Burgess-Limerick, 1998). Whilst in other interviews trainees *treated* me as if I was still the trainer. Janine, for example, asked ‘permission’ to make comments, which may have been construed as not politically correct, and commented that she was not confident about ‘how to put things’. Some interviewees, therefore, may have been circumspect in their responses. Further indication of this was apparent with Geraldine, where the converse situation occurred. Geraldine was a participant in LGAT2, which was not facilitated by myself. She was more ‘scathing’ about training than other respondents. This is not to suggest that her interview

was a more accurate reflection of her ‘real’ opinions than others, but that the content was shaped by the interaction, and my relationship with the interviewees.

(iii) Field Notes

Of the 14 sessions in the core data set I have field notes on five sessions. Field notes were written during LGAT10, which was not tape recorded. On other occasions field notes were made as soon as possible after the session, and inevitably focused on elements of the session that seemed particularly salient to me at the time. Another form of field notes used were tape-recorded conversations with my supervisors about specific elements of sessions some time after the session had taken place, when both parties had access to the transcribed data, which provided a catalyst for discussion. Contrary to the traditional ethnographic premise that field notes are ‘the bricks and mortar’ of observational data (Fetterman, 1989: 107), my own field notes were subsidiary to live recordings. Field notes were, however, useful for providing ‘back-up’ information about sessions, a record of non-verbal aspects of training, and as a aide memoir when transcribing the core data set.

Finally – and most conventionally – I used a ‘homophobia’ scale and post-training written evaluation forms as ‘outcome’ measures, which I discuss in the next chapter.

Ethics

All data collection was carried out in accordance with the British Psychological Society’s *Ethical principles for conducting research with human participants* (BPS, 1997). Barret (2000) lists a number of ethical principles: the protection and welfare of participants; informed consent; the use of deception; subjects’ right to withdraw from an investigation; the invasion of privacy in observational research; and confidentiality and the anonymity of data. All these were adhered to in the collection of data (but see Gavey & Braun, 1997, for a critique). Anonymity was maintained by using pseudonyms and by excluding identifiable material. Participants were given a pseudonym where the speaker is clearly

identifiable, in the case of the interviews and much of the LGAT data.¹² The consent forms allowed participants to withdraw retrospectively from inclusion in the research (See Appendix B for a sample interview consent form). No participant did withdraw their data from the research. Feminists and critical psychologists have been critical of the limitation of (professional) ethical codes, for – amongst other things – failing to address ethics as a broader social practice (Brown, 1997), and have made significant contributions to debates about ethical research practices (e.g., Kirsch, 1999; Ribbens & Edwards, 1998). Laura Brown (1997: 66) calls for the development of psychological ethical codes ‘that move our profession towards a greater affinity for social justice, and toward the integration of the personal and the professional for psychologists’.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic Analysis and (Thematic) Discourse Analysis

My conception of these types of analysis is they are a spectrum of analyses ranging from qualitative content analysis (Weber, 1990) through thematic analysis to (thematic) discourse analysis. I put these types of analysis under the same heading because their commonality is grouping together ‘themes’ or ‘discourses’ taken from throughout a data set, rather than analysing talk within an interview or training session in its local sequential context. Thematic analysis has been well used by feminists (e.g., Weaver & Ussher, 1997) and some feminists are optimistic that discourse analysis ‘has an enormous amount to offer feminists’, and can be imbued by ‘passionately interested inquiry’ (Gill, 1995: 167/175). It has been suggested that thematic analysis is more holistic than other forms of analysis, because it can capture a substantial proportion of a data corpus, and it allows the ‘analy[sis] [of] the same data in several ways’ (Breakwell, 1990: 87). Themes or discourses have been defined as ‘a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organizes possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomena’ (Boyatzis, 1998: 4). This definition highlights the variability in the analytic potential of these forms of analysis. Chapters 3-8 in this thesis span this

¹² In data from LGAT sessions where the specific speaker is unclear this is indicated with a question mark, or the speaker’s gender if that was hearable (M/F).

range. In the second part of Chapter 3 and Chapters 4 and 5 I employ a relatively descriptive thematic analysis, whilst Chapter 6 uses (thematic) discourse analysis to explore the trainees' interview data. Chapter 7 uses discourse analysis based on Potter and Wetherell's (1987: 90-91) concept of interpretative repertoires, which they define as:

'broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images...[they] are pre-eminently a way of understanding the *content* of discourse and how that content is organized...our analytic focus is not a linguistic one; it is concerned with language use, what is achieved by that use and the nature of the interpretative resources that allow that achievement.'

Thematic analysis entails 'encoding qualitative information', organising data into recurrent themes, that are either identified by the researcher or 'emerge' (Nelson, 1996: 21) from the data. In general terms thematic analysis does not demand any particular epistemological perspective and has been utilized by realist and constructionist researchers (Banister et al., 1994; Boyatzis, 1998: 4; Wolcott, 1994). Although data-driven (bottom-up) thematic analysis is well used in my research the epistemology adhered to varied between analyses. The analyses of trainees' talk was more closely allied to thematic discourse analysis (e.g., Taylor & Ussher, 2001), and drew upon more concepts prevalent in discursive psychology than (particularly) the analysis of the trainers' interviews in Chapter 5.

In analysing data, transcripts were read and re-read to identify prevalent themes (Gavey, 1989). Coding then involved sorting through the transcripts for the instances of the phenomenon of interest and then copying them into an archive. Fairclough (1992: 230) advises that selecting extracts from a corpus should be guided by 'cruces' or 'moments of crisis' which 'make visible aspects of practices which might normally be naturalized, and therefore difficult to notice'. My selection of extracts, for instance, focused on moments when normative heterosexist assumptions were disrupted, or where I suspected 'heterosexism' was taking place. There are a number of analytic levers used to 'tease out' and render the particular focus transparent (see Gill, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987,

1995, 2001), such as the variation in and between participants' discourse. By focusing on the detail of the talk (e.g., hesitations or lexical choice) the performance of some act is illuminated, which is consequential to the outcome of the interaction. Also attention to the way actions are made accountable (i.e., displaying in talk one's activities, thoughts, and opinions as rational, sensible, and justifiable) is an aid for understanding precisely what those actions are.

Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis is the systematic study of talk-in-interaction and has its origins in linguistics and ethnomethodology: that is the study of methods persons use in doing social life (Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1989; 1992). Conversation analysts are interested in the immediate features of interaction ('proximal' context, Schegloff, 1992), and the interactional organisations of social activities (Atkinson & Heritage, 1994; Drew, 1995; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1992), and draw on a 'bank' of robust technical descriptions of the orderly features of talk in conducting analyses. These basic technical descriptions of the normative "rules" of 'mundane' conversation which speakers themselves 'orient-to' include, for example: turn-taking; sequence organisation; and repair. Turns of talk are constructed out of units (turn constructional units, TCUs) which constitute, in their local sequential context, possibly complete turns at talk, i.e., they are normatively grammatical, intonationally and pragmatically complete. Possibly complete TCUs are not limited to sentences, but may also, in any given context, be phrases, clauses or single words (Sacks et al., 1974). Participants in conversation 'project' the likely possible completion of TCUs in various ways. For example, by tracking the grammar of talk (the speaker is unlikely to have finished after 'I put it in the'), the prosody (falling intonation is common at the end of a TCU), and the pragmatic adequacy of the turn so far (i.e., has the speaker performed the appropriate action or is it still outstanding). All these features are used to project where transition to another speaker is or is not relevant.

Conversation analysis has also developed insights into the sequential organisation of talk: overlapping talk, adjacency pairs (e.g., question-answer), and how a TCU is constructed

to ‘prefer’ a particular response, for instance. ‘Repair’ of the turn-taking system is another aspect of talk-in-interaction which conversation analysts have focused on both as a resource which may be used by speakers to address a variety of conversational events, as well as providing methods used to identify errors and conduct corrections (Drew, 1997; Schegloff, 1979). Self-initiated repair is when the speaker of a turn corrects themselves, or attempts to get another speaker to repair the ‘trouble’ (for instance in the search for someone’s name), and other-initiated repair is when another speaker initiates the previous speaker’s repair (e.g., by questioning the previous turn, ‘is it?’, or ‘what?’), or “corrects” the speaker by providing an alternative themselves.

The field of CA now has a substantial armoury of technical insights which have been applied to the study of talk in a wide variety settings and provide a battery of “principled” tools and insights about conversation, in relation to which analysts can be right or wrong about what is occurring in their own data (for overviews see Hutchy & Wooffitt, 1992; ten Have, 1999). I have applied a conversation analytic mentality and relevant technical aspects of the field to questions and answers in their local sequential context in training in Chapter 9.

Transcription

Transcription is not a neutral, simple rendition of the words on a tape (O'Connell & Kowal, 1995), rather transcripts are “interpretative constructions” that are useful tools for given purposes’ (Kvale, 1996: 165; Ochs, 1979). Transcripts are usually regarded as ‘raw data’ when in fact they are ‘partially cooked’ (Sandelowski, 1994: 312) by researchers, who tend to ‘tidy-up’ their transcripts by deleting and adding words, and not transcribing the hesitations, false-starts, pauses, laughter, emphasis and all the ‘erms’, ‘ers’ and ‘you knows’ that “litter” everyday talk. Some feminist researchers have called for more complete representations of talk, because the ‘ums’ and ‘ahs’ typically edited out of transcripts can be indicators of ‘women struggling to express their subjective experiences with the language that is available to them’ (Nelson, 1996: 12; DeVault, 1990).

My transcription style was informed by these concerns to present talk in ways more in keeping with its spoke form, but in choosing transcription style(s) I also considered theoretical concerns (such as maintaining consistency between transcription and the type of analysis, Sandelowski, 1994). When carrying out thematic and (thematic) discourse analysis, for instance, including the intonational features of talk are ‘not deemed necessary for the level of analysis intended’ (Weaver & Ussher, 1997: 55). In the transcription of my data extracts I have (generally) retained some features of talk (such as emphases, pauses and cut-offs), and have included all ‘erms’ and ‘you knows’. The data in my conversational analytic chapter retains many more of the spoken features of talk, using notations and symbols of Jeffersonian transcription (Jefferson, 1985, 1990) which is conventional for this type of analysis (Atkinson & Heritage, 1994). See Appendix C for transcription notation.

Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced my (primarily qualitative) multi-method approach to data collection. I have described my core and supplementary data-sets, and I have outlined my two overarching methods of analysis. In total, my data sets provide an extensive corpus of materials about – predominantly the process of - training to ground

my critical analyses of training in pursuit of social change, which I now provide in the following seven chapters.

Chapter 3

Evaluating LGAT: The conventional approach

In this chapter I apply the often reported conventional tools for training evaluation to my LGAT data: a homophobia scale and a post-training written evaluation form. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, attempts to quantitatively evaluate strategies for reducing homophobia and heterosexism have developed within lesbian and gay psychology since the early 1970s, and ‘some form of experimental design is commonly used’ (Sears, 1997: 18). This approach construes training as a ‘black box’, and treats training as simply an intervening variable (c.f. Swanson & Chapman, 1994).

The earliest reported study evaluating anti-homophobia education found that graduate students were more likely to rate lesbians and gay men nearer to the concept of the ‘ideal person’ after education (Morin, 1974). Such research set a precedent whereby (predominantly) college students have been investigated (e.g., Clift, 1988; Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000; Grack & Richman, 1996; Pratarelli & Donaldson, 1997; Thompson & Fishburn, 1977), whereas my “anti-homophobia” intervention is conducted with professional groups. To date, the emphasis has been on quantifying attitudinal change, rather than behavioural change resulting from interventions (Sears, 1997). This is unsurprising given that attitude change research ‘represents one of the best-developed areas’ of psychology (Eagly & Himmelfarb, 1974: 609), and lesbian and gay psychology has tended to align with the approaches of the mainstream. Some quantitative outcome studies have found an *increase* in homophobia as a result of education (e.g., Serdahley & Ziemba, 1984) or no significant change (or very slight change) in attitudes (Clift, 1988; Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000; Neville & Furlong, 1994; cited in McCauley, Wright & Harris, 2000). However, a considerable number of evaluations report positive change as a result of education (Anderson, 1981; Cerny & Polyson, 1984; Nelson & Krieger, 1997; Patton & Morrison, 1993, 1994, cited in Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000). Overall this literature suggests that ‘purposive intervention’ (Sears, 1997: 21) does result in a decrease in homophobia. Training which has incorporating ‘didactic and experiential techniques’ has resulted in statistically significant reductions in anti-lesbian/gay attitudes, maintained at 8-week follow-up (Rudolph, 1989: 81), and interventions have been found to be more

effective when conducted in ‘smaller seminar type settings’ (Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000: 128). I was curious to ascertain what I could ‘say’ about my training data as a result of using conventional evaluative procedures.

Collecting the ‘views’ of those attending training is the other standard way of evaluating the ‘success’ of a training program (e.g., Lai & Kleiner, 2001), although only a few studies report analysing data using some form of qualitative evaluation (Ben-Ari, 1998; Geasler et al., 1995; Imich et al., 2001; Schneider & Tremble, 1986). The form qualitative evaluation takes in this literature is written post-training evaluation forms. Ben-Ari (1998) in addition to a homophobia scale, asked participants to write down any perceived change in their attitudes and the reasons for the change in their attitudes. Of the 31 students attending the course nine students reported no change in their attitudes, five of whom reported no change ‘because they were open to homosexuality from the beginning’. Nearly three quarters of the students ‘reported significant changes’, which Ben-Ari summarised as being attributed by them to ‘the class where the gay son and his mother told their personal stories, as well as to an overall gain in knowledge’ (p. 68). Fifteen months after providing training to educational psychologists Imich et al. (2001: 382) found from a questionnaire that their comments suggested that training ‘has not only led to increased awareness and knowledge, but also indicates a possible impact on their practice in schools’. Schneider and Tremble (1986: 99) wrote:

‘The questionnaire data suggest that participants had a more positive and supportive attitude toward homosexuality after attending the workshop, as well as a more accurate perception of the homosexual population as it is understood to exist. The data reflect a decreased tendency to perceive homosexuals as essentially different, a decreased adherence to myths and stereotypes, a decreased tendency to perceive homosexuality as pathological or undesirable, and a greater level of comfort with homosexuality’.

The only other qualitative evaluation analysed 260 students’ written comments following a lesbian, gay and bisexual speaker panel (Geasler et al., 1995). Students were asked to respond to the question ‘in what ways has this presentation caused changes in your attitudes or feelings about homosexuality?’ (p. 484). Geasler et al.

thematically analysed their data and found a number of categories which they grouped under ‘student-acknowledged change’. Education had ‘dispel[led] myths and stereotypes’, had fostered the view ‘they are people like you and me’, and enabled participants to ‘empathize with the struggle’ in the sense that they had improved awareness of the heterosexism that lesbians and gay men face. Their findings also showed that the panel discussion had increased the students’ ability for self reflection, encapsulated in comments such as ‘[The panel] caused me to ask myself how I really feel about the gay community’ (p. 487). Again, I applied this approach to evaluation to my LGAT data. First I discuss the homophobia scale study, second the evaluation form comments, and then I conclude this chapter by discussing what this approach to training enables us to say about it.

HOMOPHOBIA SCALE STUDY

The Sample, Procedure and Scale

Of the 14 LGAT sessions in the core data-set I collected matched pre- and post-training homophobia scales for 12 LGATs. I also analysed scales for one additional session with University staff attending an equal opportunities forum¹. Thus the homophobia scale data set comprises 13 LGAT sessions. A total of 155 participants took part in these workshops. Matched pre- and post- training scales are available for 138 trainees. The available demographic data shows 88 (65%) were female, whilst 48 (35%) were male. The majority of trainees identified as heterosexual (118, 87%), whilst the remainder either did not disclose their sexuality or were lesbian or bisexual. The majority were white (120, 89%), and the mean age was 33 years.

I chose the Attitudes to Lesbians and Gay men scale (ATLG, Herek, 1994) - administered immediately before and after training - above similar scales (e.g., the Index of Homophobia, Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; Raja & Stokes, 1998), for a number of reasons. The ATLG is ‘frequently used’ (Sears, 1997: 18; Fraser et al., 1995; Maney & Cain, 1997; Waldo & Kemp, 1997), and this scale addresses cognitive and affective aspects of homophobia. The scale is claimed to ‘measure heterosexuals’

¹ The equal opportunities forum session was initially intended to be included in my core data set. Unfortunately the tape-recorder did not work for this session so it was not included as one of the core data set, but I have incorporated the homophobia scales and used the participant interview data (see Chapter 6).

personal feelings toward homosexuality’ (Herek, 1994: 224). Importantly the ATLG separates attitudes towards lesbians and gay men, which is crucial given that ‘homosexuality’ is often perceived as solely relating to gay men (Black & Stevenson, 1987; cited in Stevenson, 1988), and issues relating to gay men and lesbians do not always converge. Often, for instance, lesbians are viewed more positively than gay men (Whitley & Kite, 1995). Thus research ‘must consider differences in attitudes towards gay men and lesbians’ (Stevenson, 1988: 500). Herek’s (1994) scale also has good internal consistency and good construct validity. In this study, the internal reliability of the scale was good, with alpha coefficients indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$). In line with previous studies, and due to the work-place context scales were administered in, I felt that a relatively short (20 item) questionnaire would be the most appropriate data collection format. Box 3.1 below provides the statements in the scale, which are rated on a 9-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (9). Items 2, 7, 11, 15, 17 and 20 are reverse scored.

Box 3.1: Attitudes to Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (adapted² from Herek, 1988; 1994)

Attitudes towards Lesbians	
1.	Lesbians just can’t fit into our society
2.	A woman’s homosexuality should <i>not</i> be a cause for job discrimination in any situation
3.	Female homosexuality is detrimental to society because it breaks down the natural divisions between the sexes
4.	Laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behaviour should be loosened
5.	Female homosexuality is a sin
6.	The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in British morals
7.	Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society makes of it can be a problem
8.	Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions
9.	Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality
10.	Lesbians are sick
Attitudes toward gay men	
11.	Male homosexual couples <i>should</i> be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples
12.	I think male homosexuals are disgusting
13.	Male homosexuals should <i>not</i> be allowed to teach in school
14.	Male homosexuality is a perversion

² The scale was slightly modified for a British context. Item 6 of the ATL subscale was reworded so it read ‘the growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in British morals’ rather than ‘American morals’. Similarly, item 4 in the ATL subscale was altered to read ‘laws’ instead of ‘state laws’.

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 15. | Just as in other species, male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in human men |
| 16. | If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them |
| 17. | I would <i>not</i> be too upset if I learned that my son were a homosexual |
| 18. | Homosexual behaviour between two men is just plain wrong |
| 19. | The idea of male homosexual marriage seems ridiculous to me |
| 20. | Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should <i>not</i> be condemned |

Results

Before and after the thirteen training sessions, 310 questionnaires were administered, but 276 questionnaires (n= 138) are included in the analysis as they are matched pre- and post- training by individual trainee. Table 3.1 summarises the overall mean homophobia scores for the entire data set and the Attitudes to Gay men (ATG) and Attitudes to Lesbians (ATL) sub-scale scores. The lower the mean score the lower the amount of homophobia expressed on the questionnaire. The overall minimum positive score (i.e., non-homophobic) equals 20, and the overall maximum negative score (i.e., homophobic) equals 180.

Table 3.1: Overall results for related-samples t-test (n= 138)

	Mean (S.D.)	t value (df)	
Pre ATL	22.14 (12.76)	2.55 (137)**	
Post ATL	20.76 (12.44)		
Pre ATG	26.45 (15.80)	1.28 (137) n.s.	
Post ATG	25.45 (17.16)		
Pre ATLG	48.58 (27.03)	3.18 (137)***	
Post ATLG	45.91 (27.48)		

n.s.= non- significant; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .002$

Table 3.1 indicates that there was an overall decrease in homophobia after training, and this was highly statistically significant for the lesbian sub-scale and the overall ATLG score. The trainees viewed gay men more negatively than lesbians before training ($t(137) = -5.20$, $p < .01$, two-tailed) and *after* training ($t(137) = -5.14$, $p < .01$, two-tailed). It is noteworthy that these ATLG scores are much lower than those reported in a study conducted by Gregory Herek in 1988 (see Herek, 1994: 209). He found (in a sample of 368 American undergraduates) that women had mean ATLG

scores of 95.21 (χ ATL, 43.67, χ ATG, 51.54), and men had mean ATLG scores of 98.79 (χ ATL, 40.83, χ ATG, 57.96). The overall scores in my sample show that trainees attending LGAT are about half as homophobic as Herek's undergraduate students (c.f. Francis, 1989).

We can see from Table 3.2 (below) that the social work students (LGAT5), social workers (LGAT1), and clinical psychologists (LGAT2) had particularly low homophobia scores, whereas the first police officers group (LGAT10), fosters carers (LGAT11) and wardens of halls of residence (LGAT6) had rather higher homophobia scores. The variability is across training group, not necessarily across occupation (i.e., police officers 2 had lower scores).

Table 3.2: Summary of mean ATLG scores per group

Session	No. in group	Pre ATL	Pre ATG	Pre ATLG	Post ATL	Post ATG	Post ATLG	Change
LGAT1 social workers	6	14.2	18.0	32.2	14.2	12.7	26.8	-5.4
LGAT2 clin. psych.	14	15.9	15.4	31.4	16.4	17.1	33.5	+2.1
LGAT3 NHS direct1	10	18.9	19.7	38.6	17.4	17.3	34.7	-3.9
LGAT4 NHS direct2	9	23.4	24.8	48.2	19.9	25.4	45.6	-2.6
LGAT5 social work students	8	13.5	13.5	26.9	12.4	12	24.1	-2.8
LGAT6 wardens	13	28.5	35.2	63.6	28.1	34.7	62.8	-0.9
LGAT7 res. social workers	8	17.8	24.6	42.4	14.3	22.4	36.6	-5.8
EO Training Forum	6	20.3	20.2	40.5	21.8	21.2	43	+2.5
LGAT9 Youth Workers1	24	23.2	27.7	50.9	22.7	29.3	52.0	+1.1
LGAT10 Police Officers1	12	30.3	45.9	76.3	29.0	41.3	70.3	-5.9
LGAT11 Foster carers	3	42.0	38.0	78.0	38.7	32.5	74.0	-4.0
LGAT12 Youth Workers 2	21	22.9	29.3	52.2	19.8	24.1	43.9	-8.3
LGAT13 Police Officers 2	4	19.8	19.3	39.0	16.3	15.8	32.0	-7.0

The trends within these data suggest that 10 of the groups decreased in 'homophobia' and three of the groups slightly increased. After training the social work students (LGAT5) had the lowest reported levels of 'homophobia' (χ , 24.1), and the foster carers and police officers 1 had the highest levels of 'homophobia' (74.0 and 70.3

respectively³). These data indicate that the largest decrease in ‘homophobia’ was within one group of youth workers (LGAT12, χ , 8.3).

Related-samples t-tests were conducted on the pre- and post- ATL, ATG and overall ATLG scores. The second youth worker training (LGAT12) significantly reduced homophobia on the ATL sub-scale ($t(20) = 2.31$, $p < .03$, two-tailed), the ATG ($t(20) = 3.66$, $p < .02$, two-tailed), and also there was a highly significant difference for the overall scores ($t(20) = 4.20$, $p < .01$, two-tailed). Within one NHS direct group (LGAT3) an overall difference in scores was achieved ($t(9) = 2.36$, $p < .04$, two-tailed), as was an overall decrease within LGAT5, the social work students group ($t(7) = 3.27$, $p < .01$, two-tailed). The residential social workers (LGAT7) achieved a difference in scores on the lesbian sub-scale ($t(7) = 3.44$, $p < .01$, two-tailed), and the first police officers group (LGAT10) produced a significant difference on the gay male sub-scale ($t(11) = 2.64$, $p < .02$, two-tailed). None of the increases in homophobia following training were statistically significant.

Additional Results: Gender, age, and level of homophobia

Analyses were also conducted on other divisions within the data set. Salient sub-groups were judged to be gender, age, and pre- training level of homophobia. Table 3.3 shows the mean scores for women and men before and after training on the sub-scales and overall scores.

Table 3.3: Mean pre and post ATLG scores for women and men (n = 136)

Gender	PreATL	PreATG	PreATLG	PostATL	PostATG	PostATLG
Male (48)	26.88	33.71	60.58*	24.77	32.44	57.02
Female (88)	19.76	22.72	42.47*	18.69	21.90	40.22

* Equals statistically significant differences pre- and post- training for women and men.

Table 3.3 highlights that women were less homophobic than men. Independent samples t-tests conducted on these data revealed this to be highly statistically significant for the scale overall and the two sub-scales ($p < .01$ or less). When the pre and post scores were analysed by gender of trainee the overall ATLG scores were

³ It is noteworthy that none of the groups had a mean homophobia score above the midpoint of the scale (score 80).

significantly different for women ($t(87) = 2.33, p < .02$, two-tailed) and also for men ($t(47) = 2.16, p < .04$, two-tailed). In terms of age, the sample was divided into those aged below the mean age (33 years), and those aged above the mean age (79, 59% and 56, 41% respectively). Participants aged 19-32 were significantly less homophobic ($p < .05$ or less) than those aged 33-62 on all sub-scales except the post-training ATL score. In addition, the data were investigated to ascertain whether a reduction in homophobia was more likely within younger or older participants (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Are younger or older trainees more likely to decrease in homophobia? ($n = 135$)

Age	Pre/Post	Lesbians	Gay men	ATLG Total
Younger (19-32)	Pre	19.37	23.44	42.59
	Post	18.95	22.34	41.27
Older (33-62)	Pre	25.59*	29.98	55.57*
	Post	22.71	29.04	51.04

* Denotes statistically significant difference between pre and post scores.

Although homophobia scores decreased post training for all of the participants, none of the decreases reached statistical significance for the younger age group. For the older group, however, homophobia was significantly decreased on the ATL sub-scale ($t(55) = 3.86, p < .01$, two-tailed) and on the overall score ($t(55) = 3.54, p < .01$, two-tailed). A final analysis investigated whether those with a higher pre training homophobia were more likely to decrease following training compared to those with a lower pre training score. The sample was divided into those below the mean pre training overall ATLG score (48.58) and those above it. Table 3.5 summarises these results.

Table 3.5: Are more homophobic trainees pre training more likely to decrease in homophobia?

	Pre ATLG Mean (S.D.)	Post ATLG Mean (S.D.)
Lower pre training homophobia ($n = 82$)	30.89 (8.74)	29.35 (9.91)
Higher pre training homophobia* ($n = 56$)	74.48 (23.62)	70.14 (27.00)

* Denotes statistically significant difference between pre and post scores.

There was a highly statistically significant difference between the scores of the lower and higher (pre training) homophobia groups on all of the scales ($p < .01$). In terms of decrease in homophobia post training only the 'higher homophobics' group score was significant for the overall scale ($t(55) = 2.69, p < .01$, two-tailed) and the lesbians subscale ($t(55) = 2.30, p < 0.03$, two-tailed).

Summary and Limitations

Overall there was a decrease in 'homophobia' following training. Trainees viewed gay men more negatively than lesbians, both before and after training. For the individual training sessions, the results indicate that for five of the training sessions there was a statistically significant decrease in an aspect of homophobia following training. Female participants were less homophobic than males, and younger trainees were less homophobic than older participants. Both older participants and those with higher pre training levels of homophobia were more likely to significantly decrease in homophobia. These findings concur with previous research (Anderson, 1981; Serdahely & Ziemba, 1984), which suggests that those with higher homophobia scores prior to an intervention change more as a result than those with lower pre-test homophobia scores. It also supports other research in which men were found to be more negative towards lesbians and gay men than women (Cerny & Polysen, 1984; Green et al., 1993; Nelson & Krieger, 1997; Pratarelli & Donaldson, 1997). Therefore, the results of this study contribute to the quantitative literature demonstrating anti-homophobia interventions successfully reduce homophobia, and show that the training data I collected is 'successful'. However, there are four limitations.

First, there were near floor effects on the ATLG prior to training for three of the groups: social worker students (LGAT5, $\chi^2 26.9$), clinical psychologists (LGAT2, $\chi^2 31.4$) and social workers (LGAT1, $\chi^2 32.2$). However, only the clinical psychologists did not subsequently decrease in 'homophobia'. Thus, floor effects may not have impacted too dramatically on the outcome. Second, there is also the issue of expectancy effects. Given that the majority of the professional groups (theoretically) should have been politically aware, plus the scale is relatively transparent trainees

may have been influenced by the expectation they should display ‘liberal’ attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. One trainer commented in interview: ‘the scale’s so transparent that people know what they *should* think’ (I12b: Emma). Third, there were also a number of design problems: there was no random assignment of participants; no control group; and a single attitude scale was used, which does not address behaviour. Given many of the sessions were voluntary, ascertaining whether participants were representative of their professions is problematic. It is worth noting the only ‘true’ experimental designs used to date are Pagtolun-An and Clair’s (1986, cited in Croteau & Kusek, 1992) and Cerny and Polyson’s (1984) research. The former found an interaction with an openly gay speaker had a significant effect in reducing anti-lesbian/gay attitudes. The latter found that students on a human sexuality course significantly decreased in homophobia at the end of the semester.

Fourth, the scale itself also presents some fundamental challenges to the efficacy of the research. The ATLG scale is problematic as being un-homophobic is constructed as being liberal. Herek (1994: 224) acknowledges that the scale fits within a ‘reformist paradigm’ (as opposed to a liberationist agenda) which conceives homophobia as ‘a rejection of members of an outgroup’. The conflation of liberalism and non-homophobia is incommensurate with more politicised positions regarding lesbians and gay men, for instance, radical lesbian feminism (see Kitzinger, 1987). Some of the items on the ATL are particularly problematic from this perspective (e.g. Q8, Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions’). A number of respondents gave ‘homophobic’ responses to this (and other) statements, often qualifying their responses with comments such as ‘and a good thing too’. Thus, the ATLG may not actually be measuring homophobia, but in fact how liberal a respondent is. Further scale problems include ambiguous question wording on some of the items, and linking an essentialist view of sexuality with lacking ‘homophobia’ (e.g. Q15, Just as in other species, male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality). Trainees also had difficulty with questions that required knowledge (e.g. ‘Laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behaviour should be loosened’).

POST-TRAINING EVALUATION FORMS

The evaluation forms asked six questions: ‘What did you most like about the training?’; ‘What did you least like about the training?’; ‘In what ways was the training relevant to your needs?’ and ‘How will the training effect your work?’. There were also two sentence completion questions: ‘I would have liked more...’ and ‘I would have liked less...’ and space for additional comments. The evaluation forms correspond to the training in the homophobia scales study: there were 137 evaluation forms across the 13 sessions, which resulted in 519 individual comments.

Discussion of Findings

Trainees’ written evaluations of training were overwhelmingly positive. This concurs with Geasler et al.’s (1995: 485) claim that ‘participants’ changes as a result of hearing the panel were almost exclusively “positive”’. Twenty-eight of the trainees wrote additional feedback thanking the trainers or saying the training was excellent. There were only six responses to the question ‘I would have liked less...’. Additionally, 34% (28 out of 82) of the reactions to the question ‘What did you least like about the training?’ were positive ones such as ‘nothing!’, ‘cannot identify anything I did not like’ or marked not applicable. In line with Schneider and Tremble (1986: 99) trainees often commented that training was not long enough, or that they would have liked more time to discuss LGB issues and sexuality. Out of a possible 150 comments within the ‘least like?’ and ‘like more...’ sections 21% (31) related to lack of time, illustrated by comments such as: ‘wished it could have been longer’ and ‘too short a length of time to spend on this topic’.

Within these data there were a large number of comments (positively) mentioning the trainer(s). The question ‘What did you most like about the training?’ resulted in 128 comments, 31% (40) of which directly referred to the facilitator(s). The vast majority focused on the ‘openness⁴’, ‘honesty’, ‘friendliness’ or ‘humorousness’ of the trainer(s). Trainers were described as: ‘engaging and sometimes humorous [in] style’; ‘very interesting and approachable’; ‘very informal, relaxed and knowledgeable’; and ‘[they] were very open about their sexuality and willing to answer questions’.

⁴ The importance that trainees attach to training being ‘open and honest’ has been emphasized elsewhere (Nelson & Krieger, 1997: 70; Cain, 1996; Croteau & Kusek, 1992).

A further 73%⁵ (93) of responses to the question ‘What did you most like about the training?’ concerned the training style and the content of training. Trainees generally liked a ‘discursive rather than didactic’ style of training, and remarked upon welcoming a ‘frank’, but ‘safe’ and ‘non-threatening’ setting for ‘open discussion’. Trainees commonly liked an ‘informal’ ‘interactive’ setting, the provision of ‘accurate’ and ‘comprehensive’ information (e.g., handouts, LGB resources or organisations), and the ‘exposure to the views of others’. Many commented that they enjoyed the ‘group discussion’ or valued the more practical aspects of training such as ‘case studies’ or ‘scenarios’ applied to their work contexts. From examining participants’ responses it appears that generally they welcomed a ‘relaxed’ conversational training style, but disliked ‘lack of structure’, ‘planning’ or feeling the training provided ‘not a lot of opportunity for discussion’. Only one trainee actively disliked the training style, she said: ‘I found the facilitator rather challenging on a personal level, in that I felt hindered from speaking my mind in a free way. I also felt my status and lifestyle almost to be under attack’ (LGAT5 trainee). This trainee’s response was unusual, more likely comparable responses were: ‘although I have firm views about some of the issues discussed I did not feel that anyone was trying to convert me’ (LGAT10 trainee), or ‘felt slightly uneasy’ (LGAT12 trainee); some trainees objected to links being drawn between LGB and Black oppression.

Although LGB trainees constituted only 7% (10) of the total number of trainees⁶ their views were salient, in part, because their emphasis differed from the heterosexual trainees. They were generally more aware of the importance ‘that it happened at all, a forum for discussion of the topic is very important’, and they voiced different reactions to their heterosexual colleagues. They liked ‘to see my peers increase awareness’, felt that training ‘appeased my anger about invisibility of the issues’, and they were heartened to learn ‘that my colleagues are not homophobic’. However, some found training personally difficult. LGB trainees were concerned about ‘feeling unsafe’ within group discussions and were sometimes ‘uncomfortable’ revealing their sexuality to the group. One lesbian found it ‘difficult to hear [...] other people saying things that are part of the problem’.

⁵ Responses to this question do not equal 100% because trainees often remarked upon a number of aspects of training within a single comment.

⁶ Half of the LGB trainees were in a single training session (the clinical psychologists’ group, LGAT 2).

Another prevalent theme within the evaluation data was that of personal growth or development as a result of the training. Fifty-four comments were made referring to ‘increased awareness of issues’, greater ‘insight’ or training having been ‘thought provoking’. Typically, trainees were non-specific in their remarks about attitudinal (or behavioural) change. For instance: ‘I feel it has enhanced my understanding of many issues effecting gay/lesbian people and given me time to think more deeply’, ‘helped me to understand my prejudices better’ or ‘made me think about my attitudes’. A smaller number of trainees wrote about training prompting them to ‘re-evaluate my behaviour’, or making them feel committed to being ‘more approachable and open minded about it all’.

In response to the question ‘How will the training effect your work’ only two trainees wrote ‘probably not at all’. However, this question was most often left blank, which may suggest that trainees found it difficult to answer. Some trainees’ responses were at the basic level of now recognising that LGBs exist, for instance: ‘I learned that there could be homo/bi sexual people in my youth club, something I have not honestly thought of before’. A number of trainees felt ‘more knowledgeable and able to help’ their client group or service users, because they had ‘better insight into problems faced by gay people’. A substantial proportion of comments hinged on trainees subsequently feeling more ‘confident’, more ‘approachable’ or ‘open minded’ and ‘supportive’ of LGBs. Some trainees suggested they would ‘raise it as an issue for discussion’ in their workplaces, or that in their working practice they would now feel ‘clearer on how to handle a situation if it arises’. Only two trainees specifically mentioned addressing homophobia in the workplace, which they did in a way that indicated that they *already* engaged in positive action and training had strengthened their resolve. For example: ‘I often find it hard to be challenging about homophobic behaviour I won’t now’, or ‘it will permit me into being more challenging toward homophobia’. Occasionally, trainees wrote about their desire to implement specific information that had been provided in the training (e.g., ‘use the quizzes and knowledge’). For instance, one woman wrote: ‘I think I may do a session on sexuality and bring into it the feelings behind the labels “lesbian” etc’. Thus, overall (some) trainees were able to suggest some form of workplace (or personal) effect of training, immediately after its completion.

CONCLUSION

We have seen from the results of the homophobia scales study and the comments made on evaluation forms that, when assessed on these criteria, training appears to ‘work’, is ‘successful’, and trainees generally enjoy the experience. I am left speculating, however, about which elements of the content of training plausibly contribute to its ‘success’. Factors contributing to successful training might include: 1) Semi-structured, rather than overly didactic or unstructured sessions; 2) A group norm favouring liberalism fostered via an emphasis on equality for lesbians and gay men; and 3) Trainers’ use of analogies between LGB oppression and other oppressions which are culturally meaningful and appropriate for the group. The use of outcome measures leave the process, content, and the question of *how* training works unexamined, so the following empirical chapters move beyond training outcomes, to open the pandora’s box of training and explore its contents.

Chapter 4

Training Exercises: How do they work, and what do they achieve?

In this chapter I open ‘pandora’s box’ and focus on exercises, which are the main mechanism through which ‘instruction’¹ is provided in LGAT. Examining exercises is important as they constitute the bulk of what occurs during training, and because they are designed and managed *by* trainers (Chesler & Zuniga, 1991; Walters & Philips, 1994; Walters, 1995). Trainers have control over which tasks trainees are asked to engage in, at what point in the session, and what pedagogic messages are to be learned from them. Exercises are crucial if ‘those who have the power to establish the language of public debate will have tremendous advantage in determining the debate’s outcome’ (Hunter, 1994: 66, quoted in Smith & Windes, 2000: 37).

Out of a total of 35 hours of tape-recorded training, the total number of hours devoted to exercises was 29 (83%). The remaining six hours (17%) contained: trainers’ introductions, information about services, session overviews and ground rules; trainees’ introductions and what they wanted to gain from the session; questions from the floor; and time spent completing questionnaires. The exercises used by trainers were relatively varied and included, for example: two minutes in pairs talking about ‘your experience of LGBs’ (LGAT 1); watching and discussing videos (LGAT 7 & 11); drawing stereotypes of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexuals (LGAT 6); a multiple choice quiz (LGAT 5); and guided visualisation (LGAT 2). In this chapter I analyse five exercises in detail (approximately 12 and a quarter hours were devoted to these exercises, so they form about 35% of the entire core data set and about half (42%) of the total time spent on exercises).

¹ By instruction I mean that exercises are designed by trainers for specific pedagogic purposes, and through the process of engaging in them trainees learn various things about lesbian and gay issues. I am distinguishing between exercises as a form of instruction and unstructured discussion (such as that precipitated by trainees) or a more didactic lecture format provided by the trainer, more common in LGATs 2 & 5 respectively. The majority of sessions rely very heavily on exercises, and exercises often affect other aspects of training.

The exercises I explore in this chapter are common across at least three of the 13 recorded LGATs. My key data are the ‘live’ sessions, and I supplement the analysis with relevant data extracted from: published training manuals addressing sexuality; my interview data sets; my field notes; and evaluation forms. The exercises I analyse in this chapter are: 1) Language Exercise (in eight LGATs); 2) ‘Life Stories’ (in six LGATs); 3) Case Studies and scenarios (in six LGATs); 4) the ‘Challenging Heterosexism’ pair work task (in three LGATs); and 5) ‘What can you do to make your workplace more LGB friendly?’ (in six LGATs). My ordering of these exercises (roughly) reflects their chronological order within training, so as to mimic the progression of sessions, and thereby more realistically reflect and contextualise training (c.f. training manuals). I conclude this chapter by summarising my findings and offering a critical discussion of the exercises.

(1) LANGUAGE EXERCISE

In this section I discuss the form and delivery of this exercise, the terms trainees generate, how trainers ‘process’ the exercise, problems with the exercise, and lastly the value of the exercise.

Write down all the words that come into your head, they can be offensive words, they can be famous people, they can be images, they can be stereotypes and the crucial thing is that you don’t have to own this. I’m not asking you to put down your opinions it’s just what’s out there in the world, what we’ve all grown up with [...] just literally write everything that comes into your head. Don’t censor yourselves there’s nothing, I can assure you nothing, that you can put down on these pieces of paper that I haven’t heard before. (FT1, LGAT 13)

Across the LGAT sessions² there were eight instances of the language exercise, of which six were recorded on tape (LGATs 6, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15). In all sessions the language exercise appeared near the beginning of sessions, and involved trainers asking the group to generate lists of words, images, stereotypes and famous people under the headings ‘lesbian’, ‘gay men’ and ‘bisexuals’, and in the later sessions run by FT1, also ‘heterosexuals’.

² LGAT10 was not recorded. I refer to field notes when applicable.

Training manuals refer to this task as ‘popular’ (McNaught, 1993: 130), and it is often discussed (McNaught, 1993; Morjaria, 1999; Stewart, 1999; Windibank, 1995). The format advocated in training manuals is for the exercise to be run as a whole group, where the trainer asks the group call out terms (Pharr, 1986: 214; Stewart, 1999: 348). McNaught (1993:130), for example, asks the group to ‘pretend you are all from another planet. We have sent you out with pen and paper to report on how homosexual people are perceived...Please just call [names] out and we will record them on the flip charts’. However, in all of the data collected, except LGAT 6, the exercise was run as a small group exercise where flip-chart paper was passed around the groups so that each group had an opportunity to write under all the headings (although in LGAT 11 only three participants attended and therefore the trainer was directly involved in this). There were difficulties, in my data, with the approach suggested by manuals. In LGAT 6 (typically) only one-word responses were provided, and trainees censored themselves when talking directly to the trainer(s). Ben (MT1) commented that ‘everybody’s being terribly polite’, and when the group did not volunteer derogatory terms provided them himself: ‘arsebandit I think is eh turd burglar’. This resulted in two trainees (Ann and Matthew) surmising, in interview, that *only* lesbians and gay men use such language.

The aim of the language exercise is to uncover and challenge embedded assumptions in the stereotypical and derogatory terms for LGBs. It functions through trainees literally voicing pejorative language, stereotypes and cultural ‘myths’ about LGBs in a forum where a lesbian and or gay man is present. This situation makes trainees accountable for the language that they are using in (theoretically) a non-threatening context³. One immediately apparent difficulty with this exercise is that it relies on trainees generating negative terms for LGBs and to make them publicly available for discussion. In several groups there was some resistance to doing this (see below). Manuals generally suggest that group members ‘just’ need to ‘call out names’. Yet despite the reputed ease of

³ Although trainees’ talked about being anxious during the language exercise, this was also a generalised phenomena in the trainee interview data. For example, ‘I think before the session started I had just a slight touch of apprehension about where is the whole evening going’ (James); and ‘you do sit and think "should I say this" which was what a lot of us were doing a lot of the time’ (Janine).

introducing the task, in my data there was only one instance where a trainer directly asked participants to ‘come up with terms that *you* would use’ (MT1, LGAT, 6).

Trainers in interview recognised the importance of not implying trainees actually believed the offensive language they were asked to produce: ‘I’m sure they hold some of those views or use some of that language, but we try and make it one step removed so that they can say what they want, erm so that they don’t feel attacked really’ (Simon, MT4: I04). This was the approach evident within the actual training sessions. Commonly, trainers emphasised ‘you don’t have to own any of the statements yourself’ (LGAT 15), and the need for trainees not to ‘censor’ themselves (LGAT 7, 11, 13, 15) was stressed. The ‘feelings’ trainees reported experiencing immediately after completing their lists indicate their discomfort and need for reassurance. With the exception of one trainee who saw the exercise as ‘a bit of a laugh’ (LGAT 15), they generally felt ‘quite uncomfortable really’ (LGAT 7, 13), found producing the words ‘embarrassing’ (LGAT 7, 13), ‘strange’ (LGAT 13), and did not want ‘to write these words, not wanting the words to be about people’ (LGAT 15).

The Terms

Groups usually generated long lists of words for the ‘lesbian’, ‘gay’, and ‘bisexual’ categories. The mean number of words⁴ were: 30 for gay men; 25 for lesbians; 20 for bisexuals; and 11 for heterosexuals. Table 4.1 lists all the terms that the youth workers in LGAT 15 produced as an example of the terms produced.

Table 4.1: Example of Terms Produced

Gay Men (27)	Lesbian (17)	Bisexual (16)	Heterosexual (7)
Poofter, Queer, Faggot, Rectum raider, Pooh pusher, Shit stabber, Shirt lifter, Gender bender, Queen, Fruitie, Toilet vendor, Turd burglar, Brown hatter, Chocolate starfish stabber, Bent, Gaybo, Batty man/boy, Marma man, Fudge	Carpet muncher, Lettuce licker, Drinks from the furry cup. Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King, Tennis players	Gender bender Swings both ways! Best of both worlds Greedy, ‘Confused’ Not very picky, Mad, Tranny?, Insecure AC-DC,	Man and woman Straight Reproduction Couple 2.4 children cat and dog marriage family

⁴ The average number of words is based on five sessions where complete data was available.

packer, Pillow biter, Limp wrist, Up hill gardener, Back door bandit, Back door salesman, Chocolate licker Mummy's boy, Well kept, Coming out, Camp, Good sense of humour, Fairy, Freddie Mercury	Butch, Lemons, Lesbo, Dyke Butch/fem, Man haters, 'wimmin', can't get a man, 'Cursed by god'	Threesomes Bats for both teams Sick in the head Jerry Springer show Michael Barrymore R. Kelly	
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There were two main⁵ preoccupations in the terms in all the training sessions: sexual practices; and traditional gender role inversion. First, there was a preponderance of anal sex terms for 'gay men', and (to a lesser extent) oral sex for 'lesbians'. For 'bisexuals' there were non-specific sexual references (e.g., 'high sex drive'), whilst 'heterosexuals' did not provoke any sexual terminology. Second, for both 'gay men' and for 'lesbians' there were numerous terms that reversed traditional gender roles, personality traits and appearance⁶. No such terms were produced for 'heterosexual' and ambivalent personality traits were listed for 'bisexual' (e.g., 'confused'). The "preoccupations" of these terms across a range of professional groups points to their cultural robustness⁷. Manuals do not provide example words: one exception is Logan et al. (1996: 70). They list some opposite gender characteristics for lesbians and gay men (six and five respectively), but only provided 'asexual' and 'oversexed' to refer to lesbian sexual practices, 'shirtlifters' for gay men, and 'oversexed' and 'frigid' for bisexuals. The terms generated by trainees in my core data set were far more voluminous, sexually explicit and graphic.

Processing the Language Exercise

Training manuals provide general suggestions for processing this task (Logan et al., 1996: 42; Morjaria, 1999: 16; Windibank, 1995: 13). McNaught (1993: 130), for

⁵ Further categories were famous (particularly) gay men and lesbians, and terms related to "gay culture" (e.g., 'gay scene', 'poppers'), or "lesbian culture" (e.g., 'feminists').

⁶ An emphasis on a 'masculine' physical appearance was especially prevalent in the 'lesbian' category.

⁷ Back in the late 1800s the Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing associated homosexuality with gender inversion as illustrated by the following extract: 'Uranism [lesbianism] may nearly always be suspected in females wearing their hair short, or who dress in the fashion of men, or pursue the sports and pastimes of their male acquaintances; also in opera singers and actresses, who appear in male attire on the stage by preference' (Krafft-Ebing, 1882/1965: 263).

example, suggests discussing the ‘origins and meanings’ of the words, and recommends discussion questions include: ‘Where do these stereotypes originate? Are they true? How are they reinforced? What responsibility do heterosexuals have in trying to reduce gay stereotypes?’. But manuals are unspecific about the precise issues the exercise will highlight and what trainers will need to point out (except with regard to the association between gay men and paedophilia).

Three initial questions were consistently asked by trainers when processing this exercise: How did it feel? Are there any terms you need clarifying? And what are the main themes and preoccupations in the lists? This part of the exercise also creates space for trainers to add additional words (e.g., in LGAT 14 the trainers added pink and black triangles, Stonewall, Zami [Lorde, 1992]), and explain their sub-cultural relevance. This is seen as important because: ‘most of them, they haven’t got a clue about what a pink triangle means [...] so giving them that information is usually very eye opening. Most of them haven’t heard that lesbians and gays suffered in concentration camps’ (Lou: I11). Thus providing this type of information enables trainers to impart the historical oppression of lesbians and gay men (as a distinct cultural group).

When the groups were asked what the main ‘themes’ are in the lists, trainees generally observed that the language contained ‘all negative stuff’ (LGAT 9), and that they ‘weren’t particularly erm pleasant’ (LGAT 9). They noticed for gay men there is a focus on ‘the anal’ (LGAT 15) and ‘actually physically being a gay man and being in a sexual relationship with another gay man [...] such as the arse bandit and shit stabber and all that’ (LGAT 13). For lesbians they observed that appearance was a common trend within the list of words. Trainees also remarked that there is a conflation of gender roles between the gay male and lesbian categories: ‘it’s like they’re swapping roles isn’t it [...] cos the lesbians are all butch and masculine’ (LGAT 15). This provides a platform for trainers to then draw out key points the language communicates.

There were six points trainers aimed to convey to trainees: (i) the language referring to LGBs is stereotypical; (ii) homophobia is rooted in the transgression of gender

stereotypes; (iii) heterosexism affects everyone⁸; (iv) the association between gay men and anal sex should be undermined; (v) bisexuality is relatively invisible; and (vi) the normative status of heterosexuality should be problematised. These, often overlapping points, are discussed in the following sections.

(i) The language is based upon stereotypes

The first basic issue trainers teased out from the lists of words was ‘a lot of this is very very obvious language we’ll hear it everyday’ (LGAT 6, MT1). Trainers then asked ‘Do you think that all these words are representative of gay men and lesbians and bisexuals?’ (LGAT 7, MT4), to which trainees (often) replied ‘no’. Trainers then clarified that this language is often stereotypical and unrepresentative: ‘we all we know this language isn’t true, it doesn’t reflect lesbians and gay men and bisexuals’ (LGAT 13, FT1). Highlighting the inaccuracy of the language was paramount, but occasionally trainers acknowledged ‘that there’s some fact in it’ (Ron: I03).

(ii) Homophobia rooted in the transgression of gender stereotypes

We can see from table 4.2 that, in the sessions, there were a large number of slang terms invoked that invert traditionally gendered characteristics; linking gay men with femininity, and lesbians with masculinity; 23 and 14 respectively (see Bunzl, 2000, for an alternative account of what he calls ‘inverted appellations’).

Table 4.2: Inverted Gender Role Terms

Gay Men & Femininity (23)	Lesbians & Masculinity (14)
Effeminate, Gender bender, Bent, Bender, Too female, Camp, Camp voice, Queen, Screaming slags, Poof, Poofier, Queen, Drag queens, Mincer, Fairy, Limp wrister, Nancy boy, Ponce, Poncey nancy, Good understanding with females, Wuss, Feminine, Fairy.	Butch, Butch bitch, Masculine, Masculinity, Manly, Macho, Abnormal, Freaks, Too much testosterone, Bender, Butch / fem, Tough, Don’t do women’s jobs, Tomboy, Non-feminine, Football & rugby.
Helpful, Well groomed, Stylish, Fashion.	Ugly, Selfish, Strong, Brave, Aggressive. Dungarees, Dr Martins, Boots, Shirt and tie, Skinhead, Lumberjack shirts, Boiler suit, Trousers, Short hair, Hairy, Hairy armpits and legs

⁸ This is common in the published literature regarding education about heterosexism (Allen, 1995).

Trainers emphasised the conflation of sexuality with conventional gender stereotypes, and the link between this and homophobia by saying the words imply ‘gay men aren’t real men [...] and the flip side of that is that lesbians are kinda all butch and masculine’ (LGAT 15, FT1). However, trainers did not usually directly challenge these stereotypes, (perhaps) because they felt trainees would deduce, from the terms generated, that they were too preposterous to be accurate. On the occasions when trainers did use the normalising strategy of stating the stereotypes were false, the construction of their talk denotes they were stating the obvious. This was evident in the use of ‘we know’ in the trainers’ comments: ‘*we know* these are stereotypes *we know* that they are not true’ (LGAT 6, MT1 & LGAT 13, FT1). Through the use of ‘we know’ trainers are presenting the inaccuracy of the stereotypes as already self-evident. This may function to align trainers and trainees and (covertly) undermine any belief trainees may have in the stereotypes.

(iii) Heterosexism affects everyone

‘The fact that heterosexual persons too are victimized by these attitudes [homophobia] has become a consideration...For example, the link between conformity to gender roles and sexist attitudes has hindered heterosexual persons, men in particular, from self-expression...thus, persons of all sexual orientations may be benefited by a reduction of negative attitudes towards homosexual persons’ (Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000: 119).

Trainers quickly move from sexuality and gender roles to drawing parallels between these traditional notions of gender, and homophobia affecting *all* people by saying: ‘if a woman doesn’t conform to being an appropriately feminine woman she’s a lesbian. It doesn’t actually matter what her sexuality’ (LGAT 15, FT1). Trainers argued that homophobia is used to police gendered dress and behaviour (see Pharr, 1995). By emphasising that homophobia is derived from transgressing ‘gender appropriate behaviour’ trainers suggested to groups: ‘we all suffer from it [...] if you don’t fit in you’ll hear these terms’ (LGAT 9, MT4). With groups of youth workers, young people were invoked by trainers to demonstrate this point: ‘if you’re a young lad, and you don’t like playing football, you don’t like hanging out and being one of the lads, then you’re a poof’ (LGAT 15). Within sessions trainees were (occasionally) asked to indicate whether

they had personally borne the brunt of homophobic comments. Trainers did this to make the ‘very very simple’ and ‘very very often overlooked’ point that ‘you don’t have to be gay to experience homophobia’ and ‘the vast majority particularly of those kind of low level homophobic incidents, the vast majority of victims are actually heterosexual’ (MT1, LGAT 6). As heterosexism affects everyone, trainers argue this provides a mandate for heterosexuals to undermine it. Trainers implicate heterosexuals as *victims* of homophobia in an attempt to encourage them to understand the relevance of heterosexism to themselves, and create a desire for change.

There is some indication that trainees understood this message, in that they raised it in post-training interviews. One trainee talked about homophobic insults being ‘more used towards heterosexuals who you want to have a go at’, and commented that: ‘I wasn’t particularly used to using the words within the presence of lesbians and gays it’s normally a put down to a heterosexual man or whatever’ (Matthew). Sharon noted that: ‘when you said to the group “has anyone ever been accused of being gay” I think that was quite useful, this is relevant to everyone [...] so I think that that is a good tactic to use’.

(iv) Questioning the link between anal sex and gay men

Manuals note an emphasis on the ‘sexual’ (Morjaria, 1999: 16) for the gay male list, and trainers consistently highlighted this: ‘the preoccupation seems to be with er anal sex as if that is exclusive to gay men, so it’s focusing on one sexual act’ (MT4 LGAT 7). Trainers either undermined or normalised the preoccupation with anal sex by first, stressing ‘there’s quite a large proportion of gay men who don’t practice anal sex’ (FT1, LGAT 9). Second, they remarked ‘there are quite a number of heterosexuals who do [practice anal sex] for various reasons’ (MT4 LGAT 7). Third, cultural comparisons are made, ‘in other societies anal sex for example isn’t seen as taboo it’s also part of erm birth control for a period of time’ (MT4 LGAT 7). In some sessions, in parallel with gay men and anal sex, the association between lesbians and oral sex was explored:

‘For gay men we’ve got like the anal sex kind of obsession and for lesbians we’ve got this kind of oral sex sort of obsession which is kinda interesting because obviously heterosexual couples do both of those things’ (FT1, LGAT 15).

We can see in the table 4.3 that there was a plethora of slang terms for anal sex generated by the groups for ‘gay men’ (32 in total), and a smaller amount of words linking lesbians and oral sex (10 in total).

Table 4.3: Anal Sex and Oral Sex Terms

Anal Sex Terms (Gay Men)	Oral Sex Terms (Lesbian)
Turd burglar, Shirt lifter, Brown potter, Fisting, Fudge nudger, Fudge packer, Shit stabber, Shit pusher, Shirt Lifter, Bum boy, Bum bandit, Uphill gardener, Brown hatter, Arse bandit, Arse bender, Back doors kicked in, Back door bandit, Back door salesman, Button holers, Take it up the ‘Gary’, Toilet vendor, Rim licker, Hamster haters, Bottom basher, Pillow biter, Rectum ranger, Rectum raider, Pooh pusher, Chocolate starfish stuffer, Chocolate starfish stabber, Chuckney ferret, Chocolate licker.	Fanny licker, Lettuce lover, Lettuce licker, Muff diver, Bean flicker, Rug muncher, Carpet muncher, Minge eater, Kebab muncher, Drinks from the furry cup.

Thus, by focusing on sexual stereotypes about gay men (and lesbians) trainers convey how lesbians and gay men are culturally constructed in over-sexualised terms, and how equally implicated heterosexuals are in these sex acts. There was some evidence that trainees’ had understood the message that only a minority of gay men practiced anal sex: ‘when Simon said something about gay men, he says it’s not anal sex, like the majority of gay men do not participate in anal sex, and it’s like “oh my god, I didn’t know that”’ (Donna).

(v) Bisexual invisibility

Trainees generally generated a shorter list of words for ‘bisexual’, and found this part of the task ‘more difficult’ (LGAT 13). They reported that this was because ‘you don’t hear about them, the others are well known’ (LGAT 15). In some sessions trainers asked the group ‘why do you think it’s harder to come up with these kind of stereotypes and myths for bisexuals’, although many trainees could not provide an explanation, occasionally they suggested that bisexuals live heterosexual lives and treat same-sex sex as ‘just a bit

of fun’, and experience their bisexuality as ‘just [...] sex I s’pose’ (LGAT 15). In some sessions trainers reframed this notion as a ‘central tenant’ of biphobia ‘that they [bisexuals] live in kind of comfortable heterosexual life and then just come as day trippers to Sodom’ (MT1, LGAT1). More frequently, trainers used the trainees’ responses as a platform for commenting that ‘there seems to be a lot less information and support around issues of bisexuality erm possibly because there’s a certain degree of invisibility attached to that’ (MT4, LGAT 7). One trainee in interview commented that she: ‘hadn’t realised if you like it [bisexuality] was - and I suppose I should have done – it was an issue for people to say you’re not committing yourself one way or another’ (Beryl).

(vi) Heterosexuality is ‘normal’ and should be problematised

The production of a list of terms for ‘heterosexual’ allowed trainers to inquire what *differences* there are between terms for heterosexual and terms for LGBs. As shown in Table 4.1 (above) the words given for ‘heterosexual’ were typified by ‘normal’, ‘natural’, ‘family’ and ‘marriage’. Trainers noted ‘that there are more terms for gay and lesbians than there is for heterosexuals’ (LGAT 6), because ‘heterosexuals are normal, for want of a better word’ (LGAT 10). The list for heterosexuals, trainees reported, was ‘far less offensive’ (LGAT 15), ‘where as all this is very negative very derogatory very erm almost well nasty I think’ (LGAT 13). Some trainees made explicit comparisons: ‘it’s like [...] for a gay man it’s like a shit stabber it’s not [like] anybody said for heterosexual “vagina stabber”’ (LGAT 13). Again, the contribution from trainees is used as a springboard for trainers to remark, ‘we can see how society’s kind of skewed here in favour of heterosexuality and against lesbian gay and bisexual sexuality’ (FT1, LGAT 11). Visually, having all four lists hung up around the room allows trainers to indicate that: ‘when we can see all these things lined up sort of in parallel then it’s quite clear that there’s an imbalance here y’know just by looking at this language’ (FT1, LGAT 15).

On a number of occasions the trainer moved beyond pointing out the differences between categories to suggest that there are similarities in the way individuals experience their sexuality in relation to cultural messages: ‘we can all be kind of sort of y’know pushed out from these kind of cultural notions if we don’t individually want to conform to all this

stuff' (FT1, LGAT 15). In my field notes I describe how I shifted from explaining the differences between LGBs and heterosexuals to strengthening similarities and drawing explicit parallels between LGB and heterosexual experience:

Initially I drew the comparison between heterosexuality and whiteness using myself as an example 'I don't think of myself as a white person, I think of myself as a person'; 'I don't often think about the privileges that I have just by virtue of being white'. I drew the comparison with whiteness to illustrate the normative status of both categories and emphasise that heterosexual isn't seen as an identity category in the same way as other sexualities. I then asked the group 'what's the main preoccupation(s) with the heterosexual words?' and the group looked blank (!), so I said 'well they're rather dull aren't they, and bland and not very vivid' (this got a laugh from some group members). I used this to make the point that just as the LGB words are limiting (potentially) alienating and inaccurate so are the words to describe heterosexuality. I expanded on this by pointing out that many heterosexuals choose not to get married or have children or fulfil those conventional roles so these 'myths' limit *everyone* and encourage conformity.

What I was trying to do as a trainer was to encourage groups to understand: the normativity of heterosexuality; the differences between the cultural messages about all the sexualities; and also the similarity in the way stereotypes can alienate individuals regardless of their sexuality. Some of the comments trainees made in interview suggest this had some impact on them: 'it's hard to think of derogatory terms for any dominant culture erm because they're powerful enough group to make those terms not very erm derogatory' (Beryl); 'it was most intriguing that we couldn't come up with anything for het- nothing derogatory shall we say for heterosexual' (Lynn).

Problems with the Language Exercise

There are a number of hurdles to trainers being able to convincingly convey the points they draw from the language. These are: (i) trainers having difficulty emphasising difference and similarity simultaneously; and (ii) dealing with trainees' 'ignorance'.

(i) Difficult to emphasise difference and similarity simultaneously

It can be difficult for a trainer to straddle emphasising differences between LGBs and heterosexuals whilst simultaneously attempting to align all sexualities in relation to cultural stereotypes. Consider this extract from LGAT 13:

- FT1 Thi::s ((words for heterosexuals)) is constraining as well >y'know< I could be a a heterosexual who doesn't want a FAMily who who doesn't want to be conforming and acceptable=
Stuart °Mm°
FT1 =And yet this is what this is how you know this is what I'm constrained by and I think I think the point is:: that a::ll of this stuff ((pointing to terms on the flip-chart)) erm (.) does exactly that whichever category [we] happen to fit in.
Kathy [Mm]
Stuart Cos it doesn't really matter (.) any of that because you're a Niki ((Ftrain1)) (1.0) an::d you're a Kathy, and I'm a Stuart an
Stuart2 Well (.) we're Stuarts ((Stuart2 is a gay man))
Stuart We're different Stuarts
FT1 °Yeah yeah°
Stuart [An it] doesn't really [matter]
FT1 [Yeah] [I mean] Well no it doesn't apart from these three groups tcht get a lot of shit ((LGB groups))
Stuart YEAH
FT1 And this one doesn't ((i.e. heterosexuals))
Stuart Mm
Kathy Mm
FT1 Y'know but yeah I take your point about y'know °we are all individuals° (.) Okaydokey well let's move on ((changes subject))

In this extract, FT1 presents the case that traditional femininity ‘constrains’ everyone despite whether they are lesbian or heterosexual, by referring to ‘this stuff’. She indicates that, in fact, the ideological structure of all categories can oppress individuals (see also ‘heterosexism affects everyone’). The use of the phrase ‘happen to fit it’ implies there is no personal agency behind sexuality, and identities are (almost) arbitrary. Stuart begins his turn with ‘cos’ which agrees with and extends FT1’s previous turn. However, contrary to aligning with FT1’s “similarity between social constraints” position which posits that traditional femininity (and masculinity) are oppressive and should be challenged, Stuart shifts the argument to the notion that category membership per se ‘doesn’t really matter’ because we are all individuals.

FT1 has invoked an imaginary heterosexual woman to illustrate her position, whilst Stuart individualises in a powerful way by using the names of real individuals. Further, he suggests that himself and Stuart2 are merely individually different – a gay man is no less ‘constrained’ than a heterosexual man. FT1 responds to this by hedging – ‘well’ – and suggesting agreement with Stuart (‘no it doesn’t’), which she then softens (‘apart from’) before upgrading her previous term, ‘constraint’ to ‘a lot of shit’ in reference specifically to lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. Thus, we see here in a short number of turns, how the trainer’s ‘sameness’ (based on social constraints) argument is transformed by a participant to a ‘sameness’ argument premised on individual differences. The resolution of which is FT1’s reversion back to a structural ‘differences’ argument stressing LGBs are oppressed and heterosexuals are not. Therefore, straddling similarities to, and differences from heterosexuals proves problematic when speakers are premising their arguments on different constructions of the world – in this instance the societal/structural (FT1) versus the individual (Stuart).

A further difficulty can arise when a trainee rejects the similarities between sexualities argument outright. If trainees are unwilling or unable to problematise the normativity of heterosexuality, drawing parallels between sexualities is a redundant strategy. This occurred in one session when a trainee announced ‘but that [heterosexuality] follows the law of nature and the other doesn’t’ (LGAT 15). This can draw the trainer into a discussion about what constitutes ‘natural’ (as in LGAT 15) and detract from the point at hand.

(ii) Dealing with Trainees’ ‘Ignorance’

Trainees used this exercise as an opportunity to display their lack of prejudice, in four main ways. By: (a) Displaying ignorance; (b) Resisting engagement; (c) Self-other distancing; and (d) Focusing on the positive. These four strategies for denying prejudice, as I now go on to discuss, operate through different constructions of the self and the world. *Displaying ignorance* is an intra-psychic denial of prejudice; trainees claim they simply lack ‘homophobic’ thoughts. *Resisting engagement* plays on the distinction between internal thoughts and (resisting) their public display. *Self-other distancing*

operates on an inter-group distinction. In other words, the participants can present themselves in a positive light by reference to other (worse) individuals or groups. Lastly, *Focusing on the positive* implies a societal lack of “homophobia”.

(a) *Displaying Ignorance*

In spite of trainers’ attempts to encourage trainees not to ‘censor’ themselves, often during training, trainees remark upon their inability to generate words, or their ignorance of terms of abuse for LGBs. Usually educational contexts are sites used to actively display knowledge and understanding, but the converse happened in my core data. Further, trainees (occasionally) collectively constructed themselves as ignorant. We can see in the extract below, from LGAT 7, that one initial comment from a participant opened the floodgates to multiple protestations of ignorance.

Malcolm: I’ve never heard of a uphill gardener
 Alison: No I haven’t either
 Malcolm: Or a buller man buller men before it
 Tom: No I haven’t
 Alison: I didn’t know what a buller man was
 Malcolm: Back door kicked in.
 Deb: I’ve not heard of that

Often trainees commented: ‘I’m learning a lot here, I’ve never heard half of these’ (LGAT 10). Displaying that they are ‘learning’ and the language is ‘new’ can function to mitigate any charge that they are prejudiced; they are merely assimilating new information. Claiming lack of prior knowledge works in a similar manner. By remarking ‘I don’t know what to say’, ‘I don’t know, you’ll have to tell me (laughs)’ (LGAT 11) or ‘Are you making these up...I’m sorry I’m very limited on this I *have* to admit...Oh we’ve lead such sheltered lives (laughs)’ (LGAT 10) trainees resisted admitting a (personal) connection to the language, or denied that negativity exists via claiming naiveté and innocence. Often trainees suggested partial or limited prior knowledge, such as ‘the *only* thing I’ve ever heard of is like queer’ or ‘I *only* know about two for like lesbian and I didn’t even know none for bisexuals’ (LGAT 11), or (as highlighted in the extract from LGAT 7) they did not ‘know’ specific terms.

(b) Resisting Engagement

Another way trainees' displayed their lack of prejudice was to resist providing terms. Trainees (implicitly) admitted to knowing derogatory terms for LGBs, but expressed concern about voicing them publicly. Within LGAT 7 and LGAT 11 trainees were reluctant to engage with the exercise. In LGAT 11, the foster carers were opposed to voicing negative terms, in order to save face and (perhaps) 'protect' the trainer because it was a very small group. One woman asked 'what nasty ones as well', and the trainer needed to prompt, cajole, and encourage the group throughout the exercise to write words down on the paper. In LGAT 7, after the trainer mentioned some of the terms they could produce ('poof', 'faggot' and 'butch dyke'), Malcolm questioningly exclaimed 'You don't want us to put that do you?', and another was hesitant, querying 'have we gotta be really honest about this'. By voicing reluctance, trainees are able to maintain a politically correct stance, and mitigate any inference of personal attachment to the terms. One interviewee's comment provides additional evidence that when trainees did contribute terms they would 'come out with as well' they were anxious about being perceived as 'homophobic':

'I think most people I know were trying to make lists in their head and making lists on the paper in their group, and using words that I would come out with as well you know, but then does that make me homophobic [...] and they didn't make anyone feel particularly pleasant (laughs)' (Rachel).

Reluctance to produce pejorative terms initially, and then non-engagement throughout, indicates trainees are concerned about how they are perceived. Avoiding providing 'nasty' words is a way of distancing themselves from any claim that they may be 'prejudiced'. Thus, by conveying trepidation about being viewed as 'homophobic' and (implicitly) displaying 'anxiety' about offending the trainer, trainees disavowed any imputation of prejudice.

(c) Self-other distancing

Another strategy for creating distance between themselves and the words for LGBs is to distinguish between the language they would use or thought themselves and what others

would think or say, i.e.: self-other distancing (Ellis, 2001a). In LGAT 13, for instance, a male police officer gave a somewhat laboured account of his own uninvolved involvement with homophobic language: ‘I wouldn’t part- personally I wouldn’t use any of those to describe a gay man they’re more sort of things that is is banter between *other people* and to sort of, you say something like that to somebody you know to have a bit of a dig and a bit of a mess about’ (LGAT 13). Other groups were implicated as being more homophobic than the trainees, including: ‘men’ (LGAT 15), ‘engineers’ (LGAT 6), ‘black people’ (LGAT 7) and ‘miners’ (LGAT 7). Similarly, trainees claimed no cognitive involvement in producing anti-lesbian/gay language, for instance ‘I wrote it, I didn’t think it’ (LGAT 10), which functions to present an unprejudiced self-image.

(d) *Focusing on the Positive*

Trainees endeavour to appear enlightened and non-homophobic by making concerted efforts to avoid negative terminology, as one interviewee remarked ‘in our group we were really really really focused on trying to find some positives’ (Sharon). For instance, one male trainee, when reporting to the larger group the tenor of their discussion, emphasised: ‘when we did it we tried not to er focus on some of the negative names but some of the other issues that are associated with y’know between the subject’ (LGAT 7). Although an interviewee acknowledged ‘the first things that come to mind are the negative things’, she found that ‘there was just equally as many’ (Sharon) positive terms for LGBs. Approaching the task in this way reduces the amount of material available for the trainer to process. Trainees’ desire to demonstrate their affirmativeness towards LGBs implies the ideological and cultural framework they are drawing upon is not heterosexist. Thus, by wishing to be seen as pro-LGB they (potentially) undermine the pedagogic effectiveness of the task.

The resistance of trainees to engage with the exercise causes difficulties for trainers if there are few words for them to discuss as a result. Reticence about words generation, as well as displaying not being prejudiced, could relate to prudishness about sex more generally. Trainees perhaps do not want to appear ignorant about sex, but they may also want to avoid being “rude”. Trainees (may) avoid appearing knowledgeable about

particular sexual practices, because of what this may imply about their own sexuality. In other words, knowing ‘too much’ about LGB sexualities could result in colleagues casting aspersions on their sexuality, so this requires careful management. Thus sex as a topic of discussion generally and LGB sex in particular may foster the appearance of ignorance in trainees. Trainers supplying words can overcome this problem, but it probably is not as pedagogically effective as exploring and challenging the terms trainees produce.

Value of the Language Exercise

Quantity and Impact of Negative Words

The exercise enabled trainees to appreciate the volume of negative words about LGBs, and understand their impact. Although some trainees felt they merely learned a few more derogatory names for LGBs, others ‘did appreciate that’ (LGAT 15). From the written evaluations forms three trainees indicated that they had most liked and valued this exercise *because* they ‘learn[ed] all the names GLB get called’ (LGAT 15, 9, 14: wc). Some trainees in interview had welcomed the clarification of the language: ‘I learnt more of what the slang words are for gay people, because there’s a lot of things that I’ve heard and didn’t really know what it meant. So it’s made me more aware’ (Donna). As well as encouraging awareness in trainees, the discussion of pejorative words ‘opens your eyes to so many negative things out there and how horrible people can be’ (Lauren). Further, some trainees felt the task, ‘highlight[ed] the imbalances I suppose, the thing like there’s a lot more derogatory words for gay people a bit bisexuals and a bit heterosexual people and about the pervading heterosexuality’ (Ian).

One trainee described how he thought a lesbian or gay man may feel when hearing such language:

If you’re out with a group of people socialising and erm with in that group you have somebody who is y’know a gay male or a lesbian and you’re using some of this terminology in your general sort of conversation around that person is going to think y’know “shit keep my mouth shut” y’know “I ain’t gonna say anything” y’know you sort of people making a statement of how how they feel about it (male participant, LGAT 7).

Beyond seeing the volume of negative words for LGBs some trainees articulated the impact this may have on LGB people after completing the task. This was most prevalent in LGAT 7 where trainees were asked what they thought the impact could be. As well as the terminology effectively ‘making aliens of people’ and ‘suppress[ing] it’, trainees felt the stereotypes ‘can’t really encourage people to come out’ (LGAT 7 & 13). Some trainees remarked upon the role homophobia plays in maintaining gender stereotypes, and found that connection that trainers had drawn out ‘really interesting’ (Sharon). One trainee explained during the closing round of the session that she had:

Never really kind of (.) made the link between the fact that lesbians stereotypes about lesbians and a lot of gay men are like that link between gender roles that’s really kind of slotted into my thinking much more clearly now and the whole heterosexism and stuff and just seeing them like that that flip chart over there will stay in my mind and it’s reminded me again of just how (.) much I feel about the whole issue I feel quite emotional at the end of this morning that I want to change the world actually (Preeti, LGAT 14)

Opportunity for the clarification of words

LGAT provides the opportunity for trainees to ask trainers which terms LGBs are comfortable with and which ones are offensive. Zuckerman and Simons (1996: 5, original emphasis) provide a list of terms related to sexual identity and give guidance about whether they are appropriate for use in the workplace. For example, for ‘dyke’ they write: ‘derogatory toward lesbians and at the same time, in-group language for many lesbians. Of uncertain origin, although thought to come from Boadicea, a woman warrior who allegedly had many female lovers. *Not appropriate for use by anyone in the workplace*’ Only one trainee, in LGAT 6, asked which were offensive terms within a training session. The trainer’s response (below) is very different to the approach manuals recommend⁹.

Nekesh	Are they <u>offensive</u> to gay (.) and=
M	(cough)
Nekesh	=lesbians do t-they [what]
MT1	[erm]
Nekesh:	in effect what what is the (.) offensive.

⁹ Zuckerman and Simons (1996: 10) propose that ‘occasionally in your discussion of the topic, you will have to let uniformed people know that such terms hurt you and others and should not be used’.

- MT1 er::m [(.)] [do do do do] do do do do do do do do ((looking at list of offensive words))
- M [(please)]
- ? [°huh huh°]
- MT1 Well all of those.
- (laughter)
- MT1 NO:: I like to be called a tu::rd burglar.
(laughter)
- Nekesh (people will) find that very ob::vious what about some others.
- MT1 Erm generally speaking if if if you're wanting to be safe (.) erm the words lesbian gay and bisexual (.) are er are fai::rly safe. erm >homosexual< mm bit of an iffy one that, erm it it t-not to be tha::t friendly y'know erm lesbian gay bisexual fairly fairly straight forward ((continues))

Although the trainer initially responds to the question with sarcasm, and Nekesh has to persist to get a 'serious' response, MT1 goes on to recommend which language is 'safe'. The opportunity for clarification was clearly useful. One trainee commented upon the explanation of terms (above) in interview:

Ben [Mtrain1] was saying about terminology the gay community would find acceptable and not acceptable. Some of the subtleties of that I think might have slipped me by if anyone said to me "here is a list of you know three or four words -which ones would be erm unchallenging would be acceptable to the gay community which ones would they actually take offence at?" I don't think I would have got that right (James).

Discomfort is Appropriate

Although feeling discomfort was a negative aspect of the exercise from (some) trainee's perspectives, it would be disconcerting for trainers if trainees felt no unease when vocalising disparaging language in the training context. There was educational value in trainees feeling 'uncomfortable with it, because we felt horrible, labelling somebody', and realising that 'I wouldn't even call my worst enemy some of the words' (Donna). One male police officer (Stuart) commented in the closing round of the session that he 'found that quite strange but quite good'. Although he felt that 'all that sort of stuff is silly' and that 'usually it's just a bit of a giggle' to use homophobic language, he found 'when put into the context of being here and writing them all down you become suddenly very aware of how insulting all those phrases are and how uncomfortable it can be to put it down in writing' (Stuart, LGAT 13). Therefore, trainees' discomfort about using anti-

lesbian/gay language can enable them to realise that it is not merely ‘silly’ or a ‘giggle’, but does negatively impact on lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. That made it: ‘a good exercise’ (Stuart, LGAT 13).

‘Gay’ as a term of abuse

Finally, there is evidence that trainees’ develop - through this exercise and subsequent tasks – an understand that the use of ‘gay’ as a generic term of abuse is inappropriate. As one trainer explained ‘people very often say “well y’know gay is just a generic term of abuse, it doesn’t mean that I don’t like gay people [...] it just means bad or horrible or nasty”’ (FT1, LGAT 7). Trainers then problematised the use of ‘gay’ in this manner, explaining that it does not encourage people to come out, nor does it create a welcoming working climate. This was most often discussed with groups who were working with young people as, particularly youth workers, highlighted that ‘gay’ was commonly used in a globally negative way by young people. For instance, one youth worker noted that she had ‘noticed a lot in youth clubs how gay is used a lot by young people as a slang word for anything [...] being crap’ and ‘its just kind of been absorbed into like [...] people’s language a term for something that’s bad’ (LGAT 15). In one LGAT with youth workers (which was not recorded) one participant commented that he did not feel able to challenge use of ‘gay’ in his youth club because it was used so frequently by young people. His colleagues challenged him and in doing so demonstrated that they had understood that permitting the use of such language was inappropriate.

(2) LIFE STORIES

The ‘life stories’ exercise is in six sessions (LGAT3, 4, 9, 12, 14, and 15). This task involves trainees experiencing ‘at first hand’ the self-censorship and concealment that LGBs can undergo in interaction with others. The aim of this pair work exercise is for trainees to talk about themselves (or their weekend) whilst omitting important information about themselves (e.g., about family members, friends, home-life, clubs/groups, books/videos and holidays – i.e., the kinds of information LGB people often feel compelled to edit out of their conversations with heterosexuals). One trainer explained the task in interview:

We tell them it's a listening exercise and we split them into pairs and one of them talks about their life for five minutes, the other person doesn't interrupt at all, just listens and after five minutes they swap over and people think "oh yeah that's fine" and then we put up on the board a whole list of things they're not allowed to talk about their family, their friends, where they go, what they read. So people either end up sitting in silence or they end up talking about work or y'know something completely off the wall and using that to clearly demonstrate how people's lives are restricted and stuff, so that's very much about them doing the work and usually groups will get the point of that, even before they've started they say, "oh yeah I see what you're trying to do" and so we'll just draw on that and try and extrapolate from that I suppose (Dee: I06).

As described above, the life stories exercise aims to enable trainees to draw the 'correct' conclusions themselves. In other words, that LGBs are often obligated to censor the amount of personal information they reveal about themselves when in heterosexist environments. There were two versions of the task in my data. In LGATs 3 and 4 the task was presented as 'what did you do at the weekend?'. Initially trainees completed the task including all the information about their lives, and then repeated the task with the information omitted. (In LGAT 9 the weekend format was used without first 'fully' talking about the weekend.) In the other LGATs (9, 12 & 14), the task involved trainees discussing their lives but excluding information.

Trainers introduce the exercise in tokenistic forms, providing only the practical information trainees need to accomplish it. They suggest to groups it is about 'how we talk about our lives and what we say to other people about our lives' (LGAT 3) A minimal explanation of the aims of the task is provided, because, trainers said, 'it's an exercise that probably people have played plenty many times before' (MT11, LGAT 14). In all versions of the task the trainers simply explained that trainees needed to:

Turn to the person sitting next to you and describe your erm last weekend to them but in describing your weekend to them we want you to not mention your partner, if you've got one, your family or your children if you've got them, the names of the places that you went to, and the specifics of the venue (FT1, LGAT 9).

They ask one person to talk whilst the other listens and then (after two or five minutes) they ask the pairs to change roles. Generally trainees followed the instructions without

question. In LGAT 14 the *purpose* of the exercise was questioned, consider the extract below:

- MT11 I want you to to tell the person as much as you can about yourself yeah so at the end of the exercise the other person could introduce you to the group. Don't panic you're not gonna be asked to do that part of the exercise sort of on purpose yeah tcht so you understand what you're doing
- Preeti [°>Why]=
- MT11 [Yeah]
- Preeti =are we doing it?<°
- MT11 Er the the the the the the the the the the the [HOWever]
- Preeti [() hah hah hah]
- MT11 [however]
- Preeti [hah hah hah]hah
- M [huh huh huh]
- FT1 It will all become clear
- Preeti Aa:::h
- MT11 It'll all become clear yeah=
- Preeti Oh good.
- MT11 =during this exercise (.) there will be some things that you're not allowed to talk about (.) so and they're gonna be up on the OHP. So you can't talk about your partner or partners if you've got more than one
- Preeti Huh
- MT11 You can't talk about your children family (.) you can't talk about the books and magazines you might read programs that you might watch on television
- Preeti You can't talk about an:::y of this?
- MT11 [No]the videos films and plays you might enjoy
- FT1 [No]
- Preeti Hah hah hah
- MT11 Your hobbies (.) your holidays but you can [talk about=]
- M [huh huh huh]
- MT11 =an~~y~~thing else you like apart from that

During the male trainer's introduction Preeti questions the motivates of the exercise 'why are we doing it?', the male trainer struggles to respond and the female trainer remarks that: 'it will all become clear'. Preeti also asked (semi) incredulously 'you can't talk about any of this?', and other trainee exclaimed 'what can we talk about?' (LGAT 12).

Trainees' Responses to Life Stories

The initial question that trainers asked groups after they had worked in pairs was 'How did it feel doing that?' (LGAT 9). When trainees did two versions of the task (with, and

then without crucial information) they were asked this question after the second ‘conversation’. Generally, trainees remarked that the second version of the exercise was ‘much harder’ and ‘very frustrating’ (LGAT 3). In LGAT 3 there was laughter from the group after they were asked to do the exercise a second time, one female trainee remarked ‘it certainly won’t take two minutes’. Similarly, trainees’ responses to the censored only version of the exercise indicated they found it ‘strange’ (LGAT 15), ‘boring’ (LGAT 12), ‘really difficult’ (LGAT 14) and ‘hard’ focusing on ‘what you’re allowed to say’, and felt the task ‘makes you quite boring and uninteresting’ (LGAT 9, 12), ‘vague’ (LGAT 3, 12) and ‘plain’ (LGAT 9). Thus, trainees vocalised being able to experience difficulty in communicating with another person when large amounts of information must be excluded from the conversation, because ‘it makes it awkward to it makes you not want to speak to that person’ because ‘you can’t express yourself’ (LGAT 9).

Most trainees conveyed the difficulty of the exercise lies in the omission of common topics of conversation; ‘they’re the common things you most probably talk about’ (LGAT 15) and so the task ‘didn’t leave an awful lot to talk about’ (LGAT 15). Trainers assumed that trainees ‘ended up talking about work’, which was apparently usually the case. For instance, the trainees in LGAT 14 discussed being limited to talking predominantly about work:

- Preeti I guess you just talk about topics that are sa:fe don’t you like (.) cos you’re not giving anything personal >well basically it’s like if< you don’t talk about yourself (.) so I just talked about my job so
- Tony Yeah
- Mavis Mm
- Tony Yeah we did we just talked about work
- Preeti About our job at work. Which is a nice safe subject isn’t it
- Mavis Cos life is those things plus work
- Preeti Plus wo(h)rk huh huh huh
- Mavis Yeah mine is anyway

Most trainees did not, however, articulate what the *precise* purpose of the task was. Only one trainee explicitly linked the task to coming out: ‘It seems secretive it seems like [...] I imagine how people who haven’t yet come out have to behave’ (Angie, LGAT 3). This

is the crucial learning outcome of the task, and in all six sessions the trainers reinforced this point (see below ‘editing & self-policing’). In some versions of the exercise trainers asked trainees more questions to encourage them to reach this understanding themselves. We can see from the exchange below that the processing questions the trainer asks in LGAT 14 receive the ‘desired’ answers from trainees:

MT11	Was it a natural, free flowing conversation
Mavis	<u>No</u>
MT11	Did you get a reasonably good picture of the person that you were with
M	°Not really°
F	No
MT11	Could you introduce them and give a full <u>rounded</u> presentation about the person
M	No

There were other occasions, however, when trainees did not respond in the ‘correct’ manner. For instance, in LGAT 15 when the trainer asked ‘was it sort of a natural sort of free flowing conversation that you were having?’ one male trainee replied ‘yeah we thought we did’, thus undermining the purpose of the exercise. If the ‘raw’ material from trainees’ weekends is not especially rich then the second version of the task leaves little space for comparison. The exercise is also less effective if trainees have marginalized identities themselves, and so are familiar with concealing aspects of their lives, or censoring their talk. For example, in LGAT 14, Preeti, an Asian woman reported self-censorship is ‘something that I’m quite used to’ because ‘I select what I say to my family so it’s not unusual’.

In sum, trainees tended to respond to the exercise in the manner that trainers’ intend; finding it difficult to talk about themselves in a self-restrained manner. This was borne out in interview with trainee who felt they had learned ‘what it is like not to be able to tell some people about - I don’t know - partners or what you do, things like that, having to keep a part of your life to yourself possibly in fear of you know what other people are going to say about you’ (Rachel).

Processing Life Stories

Trainers unpacked this task by assuming that trainees had already ‘kind of twigged’ (MT11, LGAT 14) what the purpose of the task was. Trainers drew out for key things from the task: (i) LGB editing and self-policing; (ii) usage of gender pronouns; (iii) the normative status of heterosexuality; and (iv) the implications of editing for LGBs accessing services.

(i) Editing and Self-policing

As mentioned by Dee (above) one of the crucial purposes of the exercise is to demonstrate how lesbians' and gay men's lives can be ‘restricted’. This point was underlined by trainers who stressed the task was ‘to show you really what it can sometimes be like and that process of editing bits out’ (MT1, LGAT 3). Trainers wanted trainees to experience the ‘mind set’ ‘of somebody who’s not yet come out because this process of editing and being very conscious of what you say goes on all the time’ (FT1, LGAT 9, 12). Some trainers suggested editing was solely linked to pre-coming out, whereas others ‘generalise[d] to every single lesbian gay and bisexual person, at some point in their lives there are things on that list that we might edit out’ (MT11, LGAT14).

(ii) Gender Pronoun Usage

The absence of gender pronouns in the talk of lesbians and gay men was emphasised in LGAT 3, in relation to trainees’ work on the NHS direct telephone help line. As the telephone line operators have no non-verbal information from their callers, Ben (MT1) mentioned ‘certain things I always look for when listening to people now erm one of the skills I developed as I was growing up was not being gender specific’. The provision of ‘insider’ information to trainees, could function to enable them to be able to ‘spot’ lesbian or gay callers through the information they omit about gender of partners. This approach resonated with one female trainee, Angie, who commented that:

I was saying about my friend James in the work place and I knew as soon as I met him he was gay (laughter) it took him three days to tell me and in those three days he talked about the break up, in quite some detail, about the break up of a relationship he'd just had without ever mentioning a name and without ever mentioning a gender pronoun.

Thus, by directing trainees towards 'watch[ing] gender pronouns' trainers can highlight one way in which they can break through the (potential) self-censorship in lesbians and gay men's talk. However, it is interesting that Angie felt that her friend James' hesitancy was humorous. Trainers could extend the impact of the exercise by advising trainees that using gender-neutral questions (e.g., 'Your partner – would she or he like to come too?') can signal to others they are receptive to everyone not being heterosexual (see Challenging Heterosexism exercise below).

(iii) Normative status of heterosexuality

All trainers stressed that 'the vast majority of people take for granted' (LGAT 9) the ability to talk freely about their lives and by extension their sexuality. Trainers made links between the exclusion of categories such as family and friends with the pervasiveness of sexuality: 'in one sense it's [sexuality] a small bit of who we are, and in another sense it effects absolutely everything we are and everything that we do' (FT1, LGAT 12). Trainers compared the normative and unnoteworthy status of heterosexuality with an explanation of why lesbians and gay men might censor information about their lives and choose not come out. Trainers highlighted that is it because 'we don't necessarily hear it [about lesbian and gay sexuality] every day we notice it a lot more' (MT1, LGAT 3). Here the trainer aligns with the group (using 'we') in order to minimise division and acknowledge the pervasiveness of heterosexuality. He continues and uses 'we' again to soften the potential accusation that heterosexuals feel that if a lesbian or gay man mentions their partner they are 'going on about their sexuality':

[if] a bloke starts talking about their boyfriend or something like that we notice it and we sort of go "oh they're going on about their sexuality" erm whereas what we actually we don't necessarily notice is how much we we might talk about our sexuality y'know where we might talk about husband or wife or kids and it just fits naturally into the conversation. (MT1, LGAT 3)

Trainers also highlighted that when heterosexuals talk about their lives they are talking about their sexuality: ‘they don’t think they are talking about their sexuality in some ways they are they are in some ways saying I am heterosexual’ (MT1, LGAT 4). Ben (MT1) mitigated any accusation of intent or blame directed at heterosexuals for excluding lesbians and gay men by use of inclusive language (i.e., ‘we’). Greg (MT11) in LGAT 14 accomplished this another way:

If you’re in a workplace setting and people are talking about “what did you do at the weekend, how’s the new baby, how’s your wife, how’s your husband” and so on and so forth that- it can- ordinary everyday conversations which happen in every single office >and there’s no problem with that happening< but if, for example, if you’re lesbian or gay, if you’re not sure- you don’t feel safe around disclosing that information then you might keep that quiet, and you might to choose to hide it.

In this extract the trainer heads off any suggestion that he would deny heterosexuals the right to talk about their lives by inserting ‘there’s no problem with that happening’ into his talk about heterosexual normalcy in public discourse. However, he tentatively suggests the impact this heterosexual cultural milieu can have on lesbians and gay men, who may then ‘choose to hide it’.

(iv) Implications for LGBs: Accessing services and making assumptions

Lastly, trainers drew out some practical implications often relevant to the occupational roles of the trainees. The implications for young people or individuals just coming out as LGB tended to be emphasised. The ‘invisibility’ of LGBs often as a result of self-censorship, trainers argued, is:

One of the biggest problems in terms of accessing services, so even if you have a young gay and lesbian or bisexual person in your youth club, they may choose not to come out and the question is why why might that be the case surely erm all young people should be able to access these services equally and be treated with equal respect (MT4, LGAT 15).

Simon (MT4) uses the rhetorical question ‘why might that be the case’ that LGB young people are not coming out to youth workers to (presumably) trigger trainees into thinking how they can reduce this negative impact on young people, and encourage them to talk openly about their lives and sexuality. An additional key implication was noted in relation to work colleagues and the (potentially) damaging impact ongoing self-censorship can have on relationships with colleagues. Greg (MT11) said in LGAT 14:

I’ve heard people say “well (.) she’s really nice but she’s really stand off ish” or “she’s really quiet” or “she’s not part of the team” or “she doesn’t join in” and that might be just because they genuinely are that kind of person, but it might also be that it may not be safe for them in the first place to say.

Thus trainers convey that assumptions made about co-workers are linked to ‘the way in which environments can be perceived to be heterosexual, and not necessarily being welcoming’ for non-heterosexuals (LGAT 14), and that this situation is not only negative for lesbians/gay men, but also the ethos of the work place.

(3) CASE STUDIES AND SCENARIOS

Case studies were used in six sessions (LGAT3,4, 9,10, 12 and 13), five of which were recorded on tape. They were tailored to the particular work context of those attending the sessions, these groups were NHS direct help-line staff, youth workers and the police. Manuals often discuss case studies: suggest they are positioned towards the end of training (Logan et al., 1996: 38); and that they should be practically focused (Hulsebosch & Koerner, 1997: 267; NAPO, 1990; Windibank, 1995: 5). However, none of the seven manuals I examined provided any indication of the discussions that scenarios promote in training. Case studies appeared towards the end of sessions in my data, and trainers emphasised the purpose of them was to move ‘from the general to the specific, taking into account the learning process that’s taken place during the day’ (MT4, LGAT 7). Some of the scenarios were more detailed than others. Below are examples of the case studies given to the groups. I will discuss these, and the way they were prepared, before returning to their pedagogic function in the actual training sessions.

Example 1 (with police officers)

LGAT 13

You've been called to an incident at a local pub where there's been a disturbance. Two women who were having a quiet drink were seen holding hands during the evening, a couple of drunken young men enter the pub and having been served with more alcohol begin to make loud comments and rude suggestions in ear shot of the couple. When one of the women approaches the men to tell them to leave off she's pushed by one of the group and told to 'fuck off'. Her partner intervenes at this stage and during a loud argument the young man concerned is pushed. He stumbles onto a table spilling drinks everywhere. His hand is cut and bleeding due to broken glass. The landlord has called the police during this altercation before the trouble escalates. He tells you he wants the two women to leave before they cause any more trouble. He says he runs a respectable pub and doesn't want to get a reputation for having those types in his establishment.

What would you do immediately in this situation, and following this up?

How does the sexuality of the people involved have an impact in determining the way you approach the situation?

Example 2 (with youth workers)

LGAT 7

Ben 15 years old. He's always seen to be hanging around with another boy and the other young people are calling him gay. He's denied this and has started to become very aggressive as a result.

What are the issues?

What can you do in the situation?

Example 3 (with NHS Direct help-line staff)

LGAT 3

The caller is a 42 year old married father with 3 boys. He's just started treatment for rectal gonorrhoea which he caught playing away from home. He wants to know whether he can transmit this to his wife through normal sex. He did not admit to still having sex with his wife where he was treated because he knows they try to track down the partners.

What are the issues?

What is the advice or action you would give/take?

The scenarios relate to working contexts, and demand pragmatic responses from trainees.

In preparing specific cases, a number of issues were considered by trainers. First, realism.

In example 1, the incident in the pub was drawn from the trainer's (Greg's) knowledge of local pubs, and was designed to be as plausible as possible. Second, trainers develop vignettes that cover a relatively wide range of (often) contentious issues. In example 2, illustrative of this, is the 'dilemma' trainees have about whether the young person is gay or not, and what they would do in each of those situations. Scenarios which contain

ambiguity invite the trainees to make judgements (e.g., the euphemistic phrase ‘playing away from home’). Third, contentious terms are (sometimes) used within scenarios, which act as litmus tests for trainers to observe whether trainees spontaneously problematise heterosexist language (e.g., ‘normal sex’ in example 3).

Only the police officers were asked directly how sexuality would impact on their response to the situation, whilst for other groups this was left implicit. Both emphasising and de-emphasising the significance of sexuality were paramount for trainers when preparing scenarios. Trainers aim to invite trainees to consider the salience of (homo)sexuality in *most* scenarios, whilst counterbalancing this with *some* minimisation of (homo)sexuality in others. It is important for trainers to convey through specific cases that whilst sexuality should be taken into account, there are also occasions where sexuality is irrelevant and an excessive focus on sexuality would itself be problematic. The two primary examples of this in the data were when, in LGAT 3 and 4, Ben (MT1) stressed that the sexuality of a caller may not be salient if ‘they’re ringing up I mean about a swollen ankle then it’s gonna be the same, gay ankles (laughter from the group), straight ankles they’re the same yeah’ (LGAT 3). The second was a case study in LGAT 7 (9 & 12), where a young woman ‘comes out to you one day as lesbian. She’s very comfortable with her sexuality but she’s unsure of what to do next’. These examples constitute atypical instances within LGAT, because in general (via scenarios) trainers are attempting to work against a tide of liberalism which would render lesbian and gay sexuality a ‘non-issue’.

Responses to Case Studies

Discussion of the case studies within LGAT coheres around four themes: (i) ‘gaps’ in trainees’ knowledge can be revealed; (ii) they can be used as an opportunity for trainees to *under*-emphasis sexuality; (iii) or *over*-emphasis sexuality; (iv) or trainees can ‘get it right’.

(i) ‘Gaps’ in knowledge

In the extract from LGAT 13 (below) the trainees are discussing another trainee's (Stuart) response to a case study (example 1, above). We join the feedback to the larger group after Stuart and Kathy have been arguing about whether a lesbian would sue a brewery for compensation and 'damages to my night out' (Stuart). Kathy disagrees with Stuart, and the extract begins at the point where Stuart2 (an out gay male police trainer who is sitting in on the session) questions Stuart's suggestion that the two lesbians in this situation could take action against the men involved and complain to the brewery.

- Stuart2 >And how far would that go d'you think Stuart< ((making a complaint to the brewery))
- Stuart I don't know how far that would go Stuart and I don't know what sort of progress you'd make with that
- Stuart2 I think the interesting thing there like >as Niki ((Ftrain1)) was mentioning earlier< that there's er courts of appeal and there there's wa::ys of actually er supporting people if it's a race issue if it's a disability if it's a gender issues cos there is legislative suppo::rt discrimination where as with a lesbian and gay issue
- Kathy Mhm °yeah°
- FT1 °Yeah°
- Stuart2 There isn't so they have the right to do that without being questioned or held accou::ntable for that=
- Stuart Mm
- Stuart2 =Where as if was b'cos you're black or because you're disabled you have rights the lesbian and gay person in that situation wouldn't have any rights
- FT1 Well almost it would be your call as an officer=
- Kathy Yeah
- FT1 =to think whether you would want to have a quiet word with the landlord and say "look come on you know you can't be kicking people out of your pub" =
- Stuart Mm
- FT1 ="Because they're not heterosexual" I mean you could not [in in your]
- Stuart [We wouldn't]
- Glen Yeah the the way I I saw it before I've learned about this bit here was that if a landlord if there were two black people there and he says well I don't want those kind of people in here=
- FT1 Mm
- Glen = then it would be a case where you know that's totally wrong and you can take stuff with that
- FT1 Mm
- Glen I thought you could I thought it was similar with the er gay and lesbian issue as well but now ((continues))

Stuart is challenged by Stuart2 about his assumption that lesbians and gay men are afforded the same legal protection as other minority groups. Stuart has previously said that: ‘you can’t refuse somebody admission to a premises on the basis of their race sexuality or anything like that’ (see also below ‘under-emphasising sexuality’). Stuart2’s challenge unnecessarily names Stuart as the next speaker (Stuart2 has already said ‘you’ within his turn), which lends a patronising tone to his challenge. Stuart responds by stating that does not ‘know’ what reception a complaint would receive, which resists the implicit assertion that he is incorrect, and disengages with actively disagreeing with Stuart2 - who has experiential authority (Kitzinger, 1994). The absence of a concession from Stuart opens interactional space for Stuart2 to outline the disparity between the legal status of lesbians and gay men and other minorities. Although, Stuart only minimally acknowledges (‘mm’) Stuart2’s provision of new information, Glen is able to voice that he has ‘learned’. The phrases ‘the way I I saw it before’ and ‘I thought you...’ work to demonstrate that his position has now shifted. Thus, this exchange indicates a change in knowledge (not attitude) as a result of the receipt of new information. There were less argumentative challenges to how trainees would deal with situations, from both trainers and other trainees. For example, in LGAT 3, Debbie’s concluding comment from a case study about a 37 year old lesbian caller who wants information about smear testing is challenged by another trainee (Angie):

Debbie But it it’s just a question of your own health it doesn’t matter you you are who you have sex with it doesn’t make any difference

Angie Can I just oh sorry I was just going to say erm I mean obviously I’m not saying lesbian women don’t go for cervical cancer but there is a link isn’t there that I think is it not true that having sex with men puts you more at risk

In this instance, Angie, disputes ‘who you have sex with doesn’t make any difference’ in contracting cervical cancer and (rightly) suggests that sex with men is a risk factor. Similarly, scenarios provide opportunities for trainers, as well as trainees, to convey factual information to the group. One instance of this occurred when the trainees did not make the link in their scenario between a caller with rectal gonorrhoea, and ‘the chances are he’s been having unprotected anal sex’ (MT1, LGAT 3), allowing the trainer to mention this for future reference. Thus, scenarios highlight gaps in trainees’

understanding in a number of different ways and provide space for correction and disagreement from trainer and other group members.

(ii) ‘Under’-emphasising Sexuality

There were quite a number of occasions when trainees used the scenarios to demonstrate that sexuality was not important, something they (personally) did not find problematic, or - adopting a liberal view – would not impinge on the manner they dealt with professional situations. Many examples of this were present in field notes taken from LGAT 10 with police officers. The trainees were given scenarios and asked how they would deal with the situation immediately, how they would follow it up and what was the impact of sexuality. Comments about a lesbian domestic violence situation included: ‘Mary would be dealt with *like any other offender*’; they would ‘fill out the *usual* forms’; and in reporting to the larger group how sexuality affected the incident they ‘said it *didn’t really*’. In response to a cottaging scenario the group said sexuality ‘doesn’t have an impact, but you need to be mindful of it’ and they might involve ‘*even* the homophobic incidents officer’. In another scenario involving the bullying of a young woman questioning her sexuality they reported, ‘we thought it was a straight (sic) forward bullying issue’.

Minimising sexuality was especially prevalent when there was some ambiguity within the scenario, or the character was her/himself was negative towards homosexuality. A clear example of this occurred in response to a situation where a 15 year old boy who ‘is attracted to his best mate at school’ ‘doesn’t want to be a weirdo’ and ‘wants to know how he can be cured’ (LGAT 3). Instead of responding positively to the boy’s same sex feelings, but dealing with his “internalised homophobia”, the group in their feedback wanted to question ‘what do we mean by attracted’. Rather than recognising the legitimacy in the caller’s attraction they posited ‘was it something to do with the fact that maybe this guy is more musclely or what have you, and he wanted to have a body that looked like that’. They ‘thought well you can’t assume that he is gay you know, is he going through any normal stage’ and ‘we really didn’t want to jump in too heavily and

sort of like put ideas into his head'. We can see from their responses that their approach to dealing with such a situation would entail ignoring the aspects of the scenario that trainers believe *should* be questioned (i.e., notions of being a 'weirdo' and seeking a 'cure'), and also downplaying same-sex attraction.

A final extract from LGAT 13 illustrates how a trainee's stance (Stuart) that sexuality has no impact on their response is explicitly undermined by the trainer. We join the session at the point where Stuart is beginning to feedback his small group discussion to the main group, based on the scenario given in example 1 (above).

- Stuart "How does the sexuality of of the people involved have an impact in determining the way you approach approach the situation?" It doesn't. You've got an event in a pub and it doesn't make any difference (1.0) as far as we're concerned erm "what would we do immediately?" erm (1.8) we one of us >well it depends how many of us are there< we'd speak to the landlord erm tcht he::'s responsible erm:: (.) if this group's come in drunk already technically he shouldn't be serving them anymore alcohol °because he shouldn't be permitting drunkenness in licensed premises° and it's his fault he's caused this erm you can't refuse somebody admission to a premises on the basis of their race sexuality (.) or anything like that
- Ftrain1 °Mhm°
- Stuart So (.) I'd turn round and say "well I'm sorry but (.) that's the case and I'm not going to assist you in removing anybody from here (.) on those grounds"
- Ftrain1 °Mm°
- Stuart Erm "if you want to do: that you made your reasons clear to these people and if they wanted to make a complaint about you I'll be quite happily take it"
- Ftrain1 °Right°. So actually sexuality does impact in a way as well b'cos you said it didn't [make] any difference
- Stuart [Yeah]
- Ftrain1 [But]
- Stuart [No] I see what you mean
- Kathy °I think it's a hu::ge issue°
- Sally °>I think sexuality is as well<°
- Kathy I think you have to treat it sensitively and erm
- Sally (Everybody's different an)
- Kathy Yeah (.) and be able to see outsi::de what's actually facing you ((continues))

Stuart's initial feedback outlines the position that 'it doesn't [have an impact] you've got an event in a pub and it doesn't make any difference as far as we're concerned'. Encoded within this denial of difference position, is the assumption (on Stuart's part) that

addressing sexuality specifically, in this situation, would invariably be a negative or anti-lesbian move. Stuart is keen to equate sexuality with ‘race [...] or anything like that’ and so to emphasise the similarity between sexuality and other minority groups, which is an indirect admission of the impact of sexuality in responding to the scenario. Similarly, ‘on those grounds’ cues the trainer to directly contradict Stuart’s ‘no difference’ position – to which he concedes. Other trainees (Kathy and Sally) assent to the ‘huge’ importance of sexuality, and the significance of understanding the broader cultural context regarding lesbianism. So, the trainer and (later) trainees collectively counter Stuart’s liberal account of group differences necessitating negativity. They reformulate recognising the impact of sexuality as, in fact, a pro-lesbian position within a short number of turns. Therefore, although there were instances where trainees disavowed the significance of sexuality in their scenarios, there were occasions where trainees grew to realise that an awareness of the manifold impact of homophobia could (positively) influence their professional practice.

(iii) ‘Over’-emphasising sexuality

On a few occasions the opposite ‘problem’ occurred as a result of the scenarios and trainees over problematised or unnecessarily highlighted lesbian or gay sexuality. The converse situation (equally) signalled, for trainers, that trainees were misinterpreting the implications of scenarios. As discussed earlier, one case study used within the youth worker LGAT involved a young woman who is comfortable with her lesbian sexuality. Trainees, if responding to the situation ‘correctly’, should not doubt or undermine her lesbian identity, but be supportive and affirming. During a small group discussion in LGAT 12, the youth workers made a number of comments indicating their difficulty in accepting the young woman’s lesbianism. They voiced ‘has she got a problem with it’ (LGAT 12), and questioned her motives and the status of her sexuality [‘is there some underlying issue?’ (LGAT 12)], and they wondered whether she was ‘testing the water a bit’ (LGAT 12). It would be hard to envisage the *heterosexuality* of a fictitious young

person being scrutinised in this manner. One female trainee did concede that ‘she’s happy that she’s a lesbian, you’ve got to assume she is’ interpreting the scenario in the way that it was intended by trainers, but continued by remarking ‘but it don’t mean she’s happy with the situation itself does it, she’s still probably a lonely girl isn’t she’ (LGAT 12). Therefore, these trainees are either directly or indirectly problematising lesbian sexuality as a legitimate choice or status for the 15 year old in question.

(iv) Getting it Right

The difficulty for trainees is that their response to the case studies is a forum for displaying: a) that they are not prejudiced and do not discriminate against lesbians and gay men; and b) that they are sensitive to the nuanced differences that being LGB might make. Too much emphasis on the former and trainees are accused of failing to recognise oppression or deal with difference; too much emphasis on the latter and they are heard as pathologising lesbian and gay lives and treating us as a separate species. Sometimes trainees did ‘get it right’. A typical response to a scenario which prompted ‘excellent’ and ‘brilliant’ responses from trainers, is exemplified in the extract from LGAT 3 below in which a trainee is reporting back from a group discussion.

23 year old man rings up for information on the HIV test we would say by questioning initially to find out why he felt he was at risk. Whether it was a result of drugs or erm whether he was one of the these people who thought he’d caught it from drinking out of the same coffee cup as somebody who was infected or y’know whether he was sort of in a gay sexual relationship and he thought he’d contracted it that way erm whether he required an anonymous test whether he didn’t want to see his own doctor or give his own name anyway erm whether he has worries over other infections whether he has worries over infecting his partner how frequently how recently he felt that he’d become infected because of the time scale y’know if it happened yesterday then there’s not a lot of point in being tested today ((continues))

This trainee demonstrates an awareness of a range of issues which are pertinent to the scenario. Beyond this, however, is the ‘sensitivity’ about sexuality displayed in her three part list (Jefferson, 1990). Notice that being ‘sort of in a gay sexual relationship’ forms the third part of the list. So, in one sense, her talk functions to suggest that gay sex is so

thoroughly implicated in the transmission of HIV it does not need to be stated; but in another, she suggests the converse. Note that she does not merely say that the caller could be gay, rather ‘gay sexual relationship’, which recognises that identity and behaviour are not necessarily congruent. Similarly, the caller having (perhaps) ‘thought’ he had contracted HIV through gay sex precludes any judgement on the participant’s part that infection is an inevitable result of gay sex. Therefore, this example seems to straddle the two more extreme positions of no acknowledgement of sexuality, or sexuality being ‘overly’ considered.

Only one trainee (LGAT 9) complained that they were dealing with an invented scenario and it would be impossible to know what you would do unless you were in that situation. Generally, trainees voiced positive comments about the role of case studies in training, because they ‘got you thinking what you would do practically’ (LGAT 10: wc), and felt they ‘will help me in the future when one of the scenarios will surely arise in my field of work’ (LGAT 9: wc). Consider this extract from a post-training interview:

I enjoyed the case study, because I think it was like a practice run really, of anything that will happen at work, which was a good thing because we had to talk to you and Simon afterwards and explain the case study and I think having to talk about how we’d deal with it to a gay person and to the whole bunch of youth workers was really good, because it helped us a lot to see – if we was doing something completely wrong, I’m sure either yourself or Simon would have said “you handled that completely wrong” or “you maybe ought to think about this or that”, so I found it really helpful and I think that the other youth workers being there was good as well (Donna).

We can see that Donna reported valuing the opportunity to ‘practice’ her responses to LGB related situations in a context where both a lesbian and/or gay man was present to ‘correct’ them, and also where colleagues could provide professionally appropriate contributions. Thus, the specificity and applied nature of scenarios was important to trainees (see also Chapter 6).

(4) CHALLENGING HETEROSEXISM

‘Challenging Heterosexism’ is a pair work exercise which was used in three sessions (LGAT13, 14, 15). The task involves trainers asking groups to read out ‘homophobic’ statements and then work out how to challenge them, and so aims to be a ‘practical, hands on exercise’ (LGAT 14). The exercise appears towards the end of sessions because it focuses on ‘how we can kind of practically challenge heterosexism’ (FT1, LGAT 14). A key aim of this exercise, as indicated by MT3, in interview, was to ‘point out to people that just by changing themselves and their own attitudes and reactions and possibly by trying to talk to other people about it that they can make a difference’ (Ron: I03).

There were two versions of the task in the data. In LGAT 13 (with police) and 14 (with voluntary sector workers) the ‘homophobic’ statements were designed to mimic comments that may be made in the workplace by colleagues, for instance, ‘she never wears a skirt she must be a lesbian’. In LGAT 15 (with youth workers) the statements were designed to focus on the kinds of comments that could be made by their client group, i.e., young people.

Responses to Heterosexist Statements

Within LGATs 13 and 14 trainees were given three statements trainees to challenge: (i) ‘Look at him walking down the corridor, he looks like a poof’; (ii) ‘Are you going to bring your husband to the Christmas party’; and (iii) ‘Have you seen her, she never wears a skirt, she must be a lesbian’. In LGAT 15 (with youth workers) the statements read: (i) ‘Look at her she’s like a right lezzie with her short hair and all’; (ii) ‘Have you seen him playing pool he looks like a right gay’; and (iii) ‘Are you going to bring your husband to the Christmas party’. I now consider the responses from the statements discussed in LGATs 13 and 14 before moving onto LGAT15.

(i) ‘Look at him walking down the corridor, he looks like a poof’

In response to this statement trainees’ questioned the link between someone’s physical appearance and their sexuality. Their ‘immediate response’ would be to ask the ‘homophobe’ ‘okay what does a poof look like’ (Stuart, LGAT 13; Josh, LGAT 14), or

‘what do you mean by a poof’ (Tony, LGAT 14). However, trainees recognised that this approach was potentially ‘defensive’ and ‘confrontation[al]’ and some opted instead for a more ‘educational’ approach which would involve attempts to ‘try and figure where this particular person has got this idea from’ (Glen, LGAT 13). Here Glen acknowledges the need for the hypothetical “homophobe’s” reasoning to be questioned, and he couches this in terms of a *particular* individual rather than a broader cultural framework. Questioning the “homophobe’s” belief, trainees felt, could function to heighten the ‘abnormality’ of such a person’s view and so bolster the perception that expressing homophobic comments is unacceptable. Another participant in the same session made a related point when reporting that her response would be:

“What do you really mean by that? What makes you think that?” and it’s giving somebody ownership of what they’re saying really isn’t and making them account for what gives you the right to judge somebody by the way they walk, or by the way they dress, or by the way they talk even (Kathy, LGAT 13).

The ‘educational’ approach that the trainees outlined, hinged on questioning the ‘homophobe’ so they needed to account for their position. Participants did not, however, suggest candidate responses from the ‘homophobe’ and what they may say in reply to those. Trainees realised that ‘a poof bit is an insult to start with really isn’t it’ (Tina, LGAT 13) and that ‘if they’d used the word gay that might be slightly different’ (Tina, LGAT 13). They reported that in that situation that would say phrases such as ‘that’s really judgmental’ (Josh, LGAT 14) or ‘what you said I find quite offensive’ (Kathy, LGAT 13) or ‘you shouldn’t use the term poof as it’s a negative term’ (Josh, LGAT 14). However, trainees found challenging the negativity implicit within gayness more difficult and (often) left it intact in their feedback:

LGAT 13

- Kathy There’s another bit there as well where you could actually not be able to prevent yourself from walking like that you could have a bad back or you could have something wrong with you so
- Stuart He’s walking like a right poof well actually he sprained his ankle yesterday
- Kathy Yeah or and it’s-
- Glen I suppose it depends on your family background I mean if if you’ve grown up with you know you might be the only male and you’ve got sisters and everything it may be just -not bred into you- but you’re just picking things up from you know as you grow up with your sisters 10 years old 20 years old and

you've been with your sisters you may just sort of if there is a way of walking like girls and men men usually like it's the old you know head up walk like a gorilla you know just look tough

(laughter)

Glen Whereas women

Stuart Stone in the shoe

Glen Yeah exactly whereas the only traditional family way of if you've got a daughter she walks you know very gracefully and the old book on the head and you know everything's all right and if you're growing up in that kind of environment

W Mm

Glen You won't be a poof it's just that you've grown up in an environment with lots of er females about that have been taught to dress er to walk in a certain way

W Yeah

In this extract the trainees provide various reasons for walking 'like that'; having a bad back, having a sprained ankle, or being raised in a predominantly female environment. Thus, although the officers are concerned to display awareness of the *lack of* connection between mode of walking and sexuality they do not acknowledge that gayness per se is not negative. The focus of their talk is on refuting any imputation of gayness. Interestingly, though, Glen's implicit association between 'walking like a poof' and 'walking like a woman', whilst displaying cultural "knowledge" about what 'walking like a poof' involves is not challenged by either the group, or by the trainer. Only two comments were made by trainees that alluded to the (potential) gayness of the character in the statement being acceptable: 'you'd think well so what' (Tina, LGAT 13) and 'does it matter, what's your problem if he looks gay then' (Josh, LGAT 14).

Trainers stressed that 'the assumption embedded within that kind of throw away comment' 'is that you're gonna collude with that' (FT1, LGAT 13). The trainers hoped trainees would recognise that by the 'homophobe' making the comment, they had assumed the trainee would agree with them, thus subtly suggest that if the trainee did not respond they would also be branded a homophobe. One trainee responded 'yeah and how do you know that I'm not a poof you know or I'm not buying into that as well' (Kathy, LGAT 13). This suggests that she understood that the 'homophobe' had assumed the hearer was heterosexual, but not that heterosexuals should feel obligated to undermine

homophobic comments. The trainers did not generate any further responses, except ‘you could say well I know lots of men who are very camp and very heterosexual you know what’s the basis of of this’ (FT1, LGAT 13). In situ, the trainers rewarded participants for their ‘challenges’, and said ‘excellent’ rather than undermining their efforts.

(ii) ‘Are you going to bring your husband to the Christmas¹⁰ party’

All three groups (LGATs 13, 14 and 15) addressed this statement. There were various interpretations of this statement from trainees. Some responded to the statement from the perspective of a gay man, for instance, one male officer commented ‘immediately it’s well I’m gonna bring my boyfriend or you know same sex partner’ (Stuart, LGAT 13). There was some confusion about the characteristics of the hypothetical persons who said, and were in recipient of, this statement. This stemmed from the ambiguity of the statement, which led to the implicit query from trainees, isn’t it okay for me to say this to someone I know to be married? Trainees were more inclined to see this statement as ‘an innocent comment’ (Tina, LGAT 13), although they recognised ‘it’s an assumption, and it’s a mistaken assumption’ (Stuart, LGAT 13). However, some trainees felt the question was justifiable because ‘it’s just a natural reaction because you’d be programmed into thinking that everybody’s in this male female situation’ (Glen, LGAT 13). Thus, some trainees were challenged into thinking that the question was representative of only a heterosexual world view, a position that they had not previously considered. In LGAT 13 this statement provoked a conversation about how, if a lesbian or gay man came out as a result of the question, heterosexuals could be forced out of their ‘comfort zone’. Glen described the difficulty for heterosexuals ‘once you get the response of saying “well I’m bringing my same sex partner” then it’s like “whoa” you know this isn’t- this isn’t what I’m used to this is you know. I’m out of my comfort zone now’. The trainer acknowledged the potential for heterosexual feelings of discomfort, but stressed to the group that would be ‘*hideously* uncomfortable’ for the lesbian or gay man. At the end of this exchange the *trainer* provided the ‘correct’ response.

¹⁰ This statement is premised on a christian taken-for-granted assumption, and would have been better phrased as ‘staff party’ or ‘party at work’.

LGAT 13

- FT1 But the language embedded within that question frames it up in such a way
 M Yeah
 FT1 Doesn't it
 M Yeah
 FT1 It's like you could say "are you bringing anyone to the Christmas party"
 Kathy Absolutely
 Sally "Are you bringing your partner"
 FT1 Yeah or anyone cos you could bringing a friend
 ? Yeah
 FT1 You know you could bring it doesn't have to necessarily be a partner
 M Brother, sister, anyone.
 FT1 And then that leaves it completely open and doesn't exclude potentially a whole group of people

Here the trainer provides the candidate answer for the group, with which they signal agreement ('absolutely'). In LGAT 14 one sub-group of trainees immediately generated the type of response which challenged the heterosexism in the question, by reporting they would 'just' say 'are partners included'. Similarly, in LGAT 15 trainees recognised the benefits of the question containing partner rather than husband, because then the respondent would not have to disclose 'which sexuality's your relationship you just have a partner and it's much easier' (LGAT 15).

The trainers wanted trainees to understand that this seemingly 'ordinary' question was in fact heterosexist. This was seen as important for the trainers, because encouraging trainees to develop a more subtle awareness of heterosexist language would have wider ramifications for their daily interactions than more overt (and presumably more infrequent) homophobic comments. This was, however, stated to the trainees *by* trainers, rather than participants realising this for themselves. For instance in LGAT 13 the trainer pointed out that: 'embedded within that it's an incredibly kind of heterosexist assumption, isn't it, and kind of traditional as well'. The use of 'isn't it' in the trainers comment suggests the self-evidence of her position (and it aimed to encourage agreement), which is a move aimed to bring the group 'on side', because the trainer's position was one which they did not spontaneously reach from the statement alone. Another move which trainers made to highlight that the statement was indeed

problematic was to suggest that the question could make the interaction that would follow ‘quite awkward for *everybody*’, and thus implicating heterosexual co-conversationalist in the ‘problem’.

(iii) ‘Have you seen her - she never wears a skirt, she must be a lesbian’

Trainees were easily able to recognise that the association between lesbianism and wearing traditionally masculine clothes was nonsensical and ‘shallow’: making comments such as ‘it’s just narrow minded childishness’ (Stuart, LGAT 13); or ‘I don’t think I know any straight women then’ (Tony, LGAT 14). In both groups, it was acknowledged that as ‘99% of women wear trousers’ (Kathy, LGAT 13), making imputations of lesbianism, on that basis alone, untenable. The preposterousness that group’s reported feeling in relation to the statement was clearly reflected in their ventriloquised direct responses: “what on earth do you mean by that” (Tony, LGAT 14) and “don’t be so bloody silly” (Stuart, LGAT 13).

They saw connections between this statement and the statement about ‘poofs’, realising that they were both based on ‘shallow niches’ (Stuart, LGAT 13). Although, their reaction to the association between a mode of walking and male homosexuality was less extreme and more cognisant that there could be truth in it. Only one trainee suggested that the woman in question might be a lesbian, reporting that: ‘if she is then “so what do you have an issue with it”’ (Tony, LGAT 14). In one instance, this statement triggered a heterosexual woman to recount a story where she had been ‘accused of being a fucking dyke’ because of her appearance and unwillingness to conform to men’s expectations.

LGAT 13

Sally I [...] went out once and I was wearing er dungarees because I feel really comfortable and I was invited to join in in a group of lads in the pub who I didn’t really know, but knew one of them vaguely, and because I declined I was accused of being a fucking dyke

FT1 Mhm

Sally And I I the moment it was said it was like all ears and all eyes turned round looking at me

FT1 Mm mm

Sally And I left the pub and I just felt absolutely awful and very very uncomfortable with it erm and I felt like saying “well I’d rather be a dyke than be with you lot” erm er and it was awful

This anecdote from Sally’s personal experience gave the trainer the opportunity to reinforce the association between gender nonconformity and homophobia (see also language exercise above).

A similar statement (“look at her she’s like a right lezzie with her short hair an’ all”) was given to the youth workers (LGAT 15), who were asked to consider it from the perspective that a young person had made the comment. Their responses indicated they too would question the link between appearance and sexuality: ‘why why just cos she’s got short hair’; ‘what’s wrong with women who have short hair’. But the group did not recognise the need to address ‘lezzie’, as a derogatory term, without prompting from the trainer:

LGAT 15

FT1 What about the use of the word lezzie in that? Would that be something that you’d want to be questioning and challenging?

M Yeah

‘Yeah’ is a minimal response and there was no further discussion, suggesting they did not find the use of the word ‘lezzie’ problematic (or were resistant to being ‘corrected’ by the trainer).

Value of ‘Challenging Heterosexism’

The value of the exercise from the trainers’ perspective is that it provides a vehicle for trainees to understand that ‘innocuous’ comments are in fact heterosexist, and entails the ‘practice’ of skills involved in responding to verbal heterosexist comments. Trainers reinforced the message that trainees should be active in challenging heterosexism at work, by also suggesting alternative strategies to the one-to-one, in situ response to a homophobic comment. Trainers emphasised that:

You need to think about your organisations, is there a line manager you can speak to you know, are there those routes within the org- the

organisation generally where you can challenge things [...] it may be the in situ one to one challenge isn't the way to go it may be having a quiet word with a with a line manager or y'know doing it in some other kind of way (FT1, LGAT 14).

Suggesting that trainees do not abandon the idea of challenging heterosexism if a direct response is not appropriate, again, reinforces the message that despite what trainees may feel about 'these kind of throw away comments that we hear all the time' (LGAT 15) responding to heterosexism in some way is an important and legitimate workplace activity.

Trainees both verbally, and on the training evaluation forms, gave positive responses to this exercise:

- 'Language that I use – I will always stop and think!' (LGAT 13: wc)
- 'Make me more sensitive and thoughtful in my language' (LGAT 13: wc)
- 'My perception of the phrases I use.' (LGAT 13: wc)
- 'More challenging of people' (LGAT 14: wc)
- 'Clearer challenging inappropriate language, statements etc' (LGAT 14: wc)
- 'Will challenge young people when derogatory about GLBs' (LGAT 15: wc)

Consider Glen's comment made during the closing round of the session:

I think it probably hit me today especially with those three phrases you know "are you bringing your wife are you bringing your husband to the Christmas party" just little things like that that can be a simple for me to say but depending on what the other person's situation is may make them so uncomfortable er so it's being aware of how I phrase stuff and getting out of this zone that I'm used to you know heterosexual couples you know knowing there's other stuff out there (Glen, LGAT 13).

Although, Glen uses euphemistic language to refer to heterosexist language ('stuff') and lesbian and gay relationships ('other stuff'), his comment suggests a marked change in his view of what constitutes heterosexist language. His use of 'hit me' implies that this understanding was revelatory. As he clearly attributes this discovery to 'today' in general, and the 'challenging heterosexism' exercise in particular, there is compelling evidence that this exercise is successful in enabling heterosexuals to understand how heterosexism is manifest in language.

(5) WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR WORKPLACE MORE LGB FRIENDLY?

In six sessions (LGAT 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15) trainees were asked to generate suggestions for: supporting lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the workplace; making the workplace more LGB 'friendly'; developing pro-LGB strategies in the workplace; or (for those dealing with children) ways to support young people in coming out. Four of the six tasks were conducted as a small group exercise, whilst the remainder were run as a whole group flip chart exercise (LGATs 11 & 12). The extract below provides an example of the instructions given to trainees for this task.

I just want you to think about [...] general strategies which could be employed or preferably within your work setting it doesn't have to be specific but just general strategies which could be employed in order to make young people feel more comfortable if they were gay lesbian or bisexual or to reduce the level of abuse they may receive...so these are just general strategies so it might be something like erm having resources available, having posters, having erm speakers coming in, being sent on training for example. (MT4, LGAT 7)

When trainees were initially provided with ideas for this task they were better able to generate and develop strategies to apply in their organisations. On the occasions where trainees were provided with no guidance about the areas they should concentrate on in their discussions, fewer ideas were produced.

Purpose of 'What can I do to make my workplace more LGB friendly?'

This exercise (like many others) is premised on the notion that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are a minority group and can be incorporated into policy and practice on this basis. The assumptions embedded within the exercise and its educational purpose were most clearly revealed through the comments which trainers made throughout the exercises and during its summing up. A crucial aspect of this exercise was that trainees were encouraged to apply rather ordinary workplace and professional practices to the topic of sexuality to create 'minimum standards', because as one trainer put it 'we're just an appendage' (MT11, LGAT 14). On the one hand, as this exercise features either as the last exercise in a session or towards the end of the session, trainees were consolidating

their knowledge and learning and applying what they had learned about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues to their workplaces. Conversely, trainers stressed that applying sexuality to workplace issues is not overly novel. The novelty within most organisations is that often, within the UK at least, the structural inclusion of sexuality into workplace policy is not always in place.

This emphasis on application was reinforced in some sessions, by trainers remarking to groups that their ideas relating to workplace change would be ‘typed up and sent to you’ (MT4, LGAT 15), or the information would be relayed to their tutors (LGAT 7). Another central aim of this task was to end the session on an upbeat note and provide trainees with lots of encouragement to take the ideas they had generated back to their workplaces and implement them. This was apparent in trainers’ assessments of trainees ideas. In all sessions positive comments from trainers were liberally sprinkled throughout trainees feedback (‘that’s smashing, excellent!’) in an attempt to galvanise them into action. Trainers also emphasised that organisations were already progressing in the right direction and improving things for LGBs would merely require a few additional steps on their parts. This was apparent in LGAT 14, for example:

A lot of it in a sense is good practice which is being applied anyway in your organisations by and large it’s not about making massive changes it’s about the kind of encouraging people to (.) to reflect a bit more on their practice and be a bit more inclusive y’know (MT11, LGAT 14)

Trainers also suggested trainees could use the exercises they had just experienced with their clients (especially to those groups working with young people), reinforcing the message ‘you’ve had training you’re the expert now’ (MT11, LGAT 14).

Trainee Suggestions for an LGB Friendly Workplace

Interestingly, trainees did not, in general, extrapolate from their current practice for addressing other equity issues (e.g., race) to changes they could make regarding LGB issues. There was only one instance in all the sessions where a (Black) trainee commented on the discrepancy between how racism and how homophobia were tackled in her workplace:

I remember we were all sat down one day [at work] and had this discussion on “black bastards” because one of the kids called one of the managers “black bastard” so everyone sat down and we all had a conversation about it, but if someone if there was like someone there erm say in this situation you couldn't see everybody saying right come on then y'know what I mean (LGAT 7, Lauren)

The ideas that trainees presented in this task fell into two broad categories: individualised interventions; or organisational interventions. Table 4.4 outlines these suggestions (LGAT number in brackets).

Table 4.4: Interventions in the Workplace

Individual: 17	Organisational / Practical: 16
Challenged inappropriate behaviour, or homophobic comments (7, 9, 12, 14)	Posters, publicity, literature and videos (7, 14, 15)
Make them aware that there is time for them to talk to you on their own (12)	Clear grievance and disciplinary procedures (14)
Give them space (12)	People like you to come in (15)
Mention LGB famous people (12)	Separate session for LGB young people (15)
Be ready for one-to-ones (15)	Employ a lesbian or gay worker (15)
Keep confidentiality (15)	Training for everyone and ongoing (14)
Educate yourself so that if your not in the building you can always know a number (15)	Strategies for challenging appropriately and safely (14)
Have info readily available (15)	Protection from verbal abuse, bullying (7)
Be respectful of individuality (7)	Training and discussion (7)
'Privacy', 'confidentiality' and 'trust' (11)	Address the issues before they become a problem (7)
Don't look shocked [if young person comes out] (11, 12)	Increase the staff awareness and alter the attitudes of the staff (7)
Be accepting (11)	Provide advocates (7)
Make 'em not feel awkward (11)	Involve outside agencies (7)
Try and give young people as much support as we can (7)	Peer workshops (9)
	Drama and music (9)

Table 4.4 shows that suggestions from groups were relatively evenly split between individual and organisational or practical strategies in the workplace. Trainees in LGAT 9 provided fewest suggestions (this group of youth workers were generally reticent throughout the session, and when reporting back to the main group, said their ideas were ‘just the same’ [as the other group]). Trainees attending LGAT 11 and 12 generated individualised ideas, whilst those in LGAT 7 and 14 provided more organisationally focused ideas. As well as aspects of the local context which no doubt influenced these emphases, group-based characteristics potentially impacted on their ideas. For example,

LGAT 14 contained some voluntary service managers, thus overall organisational strategy would have been paramount for them, whilst foster carers in LGAT 11 related the exercise to individual children in their care who may come out. The psychologists in LGAT 2 were asked to generate two or three ‘action points’ they would put into practice in their workplace. There was a very small amount of time devoted to this compared to the other discussions. Four suggestions were made: integrating sexuality into training programmes; ‘think carefully about the questions asked in clinical work’; ‘try to make services more inclusive’; and put sexuality on the agenda in departments.

Trainees generated a range of ideas, many of which often cohered around ‘support’: ‘if that young person wants to follow on with that erm sexualised if he's showing tendencies towards gayism or she to lesbianism try and give them as much support as we can’ (LGAT 7, Bob). Some of their contributions were nebulous (e.g., the suggestion to ‘welcome diversity’, LGAT 15), and lacked concrete changes they could implement. For instance, in LGAT 7 one trainee said ‘I think also to be aware of our own attitudes’, and other replied ‘Yeah and how we behave as well’. Some trainees hinted that their ideas were self-evident or ‘common-sense’. For instance, ‘just basically listening to them [young people]’ (LGAT 11), ‘open stroke willingness to accept and sensitivity towards other people I think that really speaks for itself really’ (LGAT 7), and ‘something as silly as not being surprised [if a young person is lesbian or gay, or comes out to you]’ (LGAT, 12). A sense of equity between everyone’s ability to discuss sexuality in the workplace was imbued within some ideas, as in the extract below from LGAT 14:

Preeti It’s about acknowledging other people’s sexuality within the office and within your team
 FT1 Mm yeah
 Preeti What do you want me to do about that and vice versa, what's safe for you and what's safe for me.

Here Preeti stresses ‘acknowledging’ the sexuality of people different to her. She doesn’t address power as the onus is on the *equal* safety for LGBs and heterosexuals. The female trainer agreed with her that addressing sexuality ‘has to be a two way thing’, but emphasised there is often a ‘mismatch between what how people [LGBs] feel about the

work environment and what people [i.e., heterosexuals] can actually do to enable them to come out'. Thus attempting to challenge Preeti's notion of a "level playing field".

Some trainees emphasised separate approaches for LGB issues, for instance providing a 'closed group' for LGB young people run by an LGB youth worker (Gosala, LGAT 15). Others emphasised integrating LGB friendly strategies into the workplace as a whole. For example: 'put a contact number for the the the gay help line and the things like that up on your list of things that- I mean along with the drugs line and everything like that' (LGAT 12). Karl (LGAT 12) felt that integrating conversations about his gay male friends into his youth club 'helps as well'. He provided a hypothetical exchange between himself and young people: 'they [young people] say "what did you do last night" "oh well actually met my [gay] mate Steve blah blah blah went to this that" "oh are you gay as well" "no but blah blah blah" and just by talking like they know that I'm cool with it'.

In sum, there was a wide range of responses to this exercise spanning individual through to organisational approaches to LGB issues. Some suggestions were vague, whilst others were more concrete. Some trainee's focused on specific LGB interventions that could be made at work, whilst others emphasised integrating LGB concerns into their workplaces. Trainers always thanked trainees for their suggestions for making the workplace more LGB friendly and sometimes commented that their ideas were 'good'.

Value of the Exercise

The most valuable aspect of this exercise is providing space and impetus in a structured environment for trainees to develop *practical* strategies for change. This was reflected in trainees comments (see also Chapter 6). Some trainees found it 'really useful' 'to focus down on practical ways of supporting young people' (Sharon). Professional practice and a clear focus on the concrete and practical was something trainees valued: 'useful to look at practical ways of addressing heterosexist views in youth work setting and ways of dealing with certain situations' (LGAT 9: wc). For those trainees that did not experience this exercise it was remarked upon that they would have liked more 'discussion around

ways to improve services in general, make them more accessible and less “assumptive”/ “judgmental” (LGAT 2: wc).

Bring some of the ideas into the workplace! (LGAT9:wc)

Putting what has been learnt into practice (LGAT9:wc)

Use the quizzes and knowledge at the unit (LGAT 12: wc)

Look at policies and procedures, publicity (LGAT 14: wc)

Will try and get training provided for more staff (LGAT 14: wc)

I feel encouraged to examine our policies and procedures and suggest improvements (LGAT 14: wc)

As demonstrated in the statements above, the exercise also seemed to energise trainees sufficiently to make a commitment to (at least attempt) implementing one or more pro-LGB strategies in their work setting. That trainees could suggest ways that the training could/would have an effect on their professional practice indicates the efficacy of the task.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have opened Pandora's box vis à vis training, by conveying a realistic sense of what happens in training. I have intimated the extent to which the actual process of exercises diverge from training manual suggestions, and shown how trainers/trainees display an orientation to issues like LGBs sameness to, and difference from heterosexuals, and have explored how trainees deal with (their own and others) 'prejudice'. I conclude this chapter by providing a summary and suggesting improvements for exercises.

Examination of the language exercise revealed that it requires careful introduction to trainees to enable them to produce the maximum number of words and stereotypes. The trainers' agenda and the trainees' agenda differ, because trainees use the exercise – and case studies, and challenging heterosexism – as an opportunity to display their lack of prejudice. The 'success' of the task is highly dependent on the depth and quality of the processing trainers provide, much of which is based upon the responses trainees give to the trainers' questions. Life stories appears to be an effective experiential task. The life

stories version of the exercise appeared to be the most effective, because trainees *always* have material to draw on, and their responses showed that one ‘edited’ conversation was sufficient for them to learn from it. The contrived pseudo-conversation that trainees were instructed to engage in also contributed to its efficacy, because the artificiality inevitably results in stilted, awkward interaction. The life stories approach also demonstrated to trainees that all people’s lives are infused by sexuality. Nevertheless, the emphasis on how trainees ‘feel’ is a decidedly liberal approach, which does not encourage a broader understanding of lesbian and gay oppression. Thus, trainees had difficulty feeling a concomitant sense of injustice on behalf of lesbians and gay men.

Case studies and scenarios were felt to be very useful by trainees because of their practical relevance, and they usually precipitated a lot of discussion from groups. Trainees’ responses to case studies were, again, used as a vehicle for demonstrating that they weren’t ‘prejudiced’. They accomplished this by adopting a liberal stance which was “blind” to an individual’s lesbian or gay sexuality and downplayed the relevance of sexuality. Trainers were usually better at challenging trainees when they under-emphasized sexuality, but were less good at pointing out that over-emphasizing sexuality could be construed as pathologising. The challenging heterosexism exercise appeared to be ‘successful’ from the trainees’ perspective. However, some of the statements were too ambiguous, subtle, and because they were open to interpretation from a number of perspectives did not always produce the ‘desired’ responses. The task could be improved by providing more context to statements, by trainers modelling a comment and response to the group, and by asking trainees to role play, rather than discuss their responses. Role play could circumvent the problem of trainees displaying their lack of prejudice (via making comments such as ‘that’s ridiculous’), rather than focusing on *what* they would say in response to the comment. Finally, ‘what can I do to make my workplace more LGB friendly?’, at best, provided a mandate for action on behalf of lesbians and gay men, or LGB issues. The task could be improved by more detailed structuring, for example, using the subdivisions of ‘individual’ and ‘organisational’ strategies to encourage all trainees to think about both these levels. It could also be improved by encouraging

trainees to think how they could apply current more developed practice regarding race and disability to the topic of sexuality.

The Way Forward for Exercises in Training

One of the most striking things about exercises is the similarity in the arguments trainers used in my data and the arguments which are discussed in the literature. The argument that ‘heterosexism affects everyone’ is used widely (e.g., Blumfeld, 1992). Heterosexism, it is argued ‘has psychological ramifications for the mental health of heterosexual and homosexual people alike’ (Forstein, 1988; quoted in McKee et al., 1994: 212), and that ‘oppression of one is oppression of all’ (Buhrke & Douce, 1991: 230).

All the exercises I have discussed in this chapter (and in fact training as a whole, as I suggested in Chapter 1) operate on the premise that lesbians and gay men – and bisexuals to a lesser extent - are distinct cultural groups. This cultural differences model is seen throughout the recent history of lesbian and gay activism, as is its counterpart, the argument for normalising lesbian and gay male experience in relation to that of heterosexuals. Trainers premised the exercises in the different lived experience lesbians and gay men have to heterosexuals in a heterosexist society, for instance, concealing aspects of our lives in ‘life stories’. However, this tended not be followed through to its logical conclusion. This is most clearly exemplified in the language exercise where the emphasis was on undermining stereotypes of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. There was only one instance where a trainer conceded to a group that the stereotypes generated had ‘truth’ in them: ‘like *any* stereotype *some* of these will be true, *not necessarily all* of them are bad’ (MT4, LGAT 7). Here the trainer alludes to the ‘truth’ in the stereotypes but this is not developed further. He could, for instance, have discussed elements of gay male culture (e.g., camp) and stressed that basing identity on “feminine” attributes is very important to some gay men, and that this difference from heterosexual norms is good and positive. A cultural differences model was not developed in the exercises, and there was scant evidence of trainers taking a more transgressive tack. They were, by and large, true

to the position that Ben summarised in interview as being ‘lesbians and gay men aren't beamed down from planet homosexual’.

Extending and developing the cultural differences model may be useful in improving the ‘success’ of training given that those attending training, in general, already appear to subscribe to liberal norms based on individuality which entail not viewing lesbians and gay men as different to heterosexuals. There were very few references made by trainees to heterosexuality being “right” and lesbian and gay sexualities being “wrong” (e.g., ‘[heterosexuality] follows the law of nature and the other doesn't’, LGAT 15), more common was the notion that “everyone's an individual”. If trainers were to impress upon trainees that lesbians and gay men *are* different and therefore have different needs and requirements this could perhaps create a stronger mandate for workplace change.

By providing this detailed account of exercises - that is what actually occurs for a significant amount of time in training - I have substantially contributed to our knowledge of what happens in training, and have provided a contextual framework for the chapters that follow.

Chapter 5

Pitfalls in Training: The trainers' perspective

Your diversity education and training activities are unlikely to be particularly effective if they are conceived and designed via the BOWGSAT method – that is, a Bunch of White Guys Sitting Around a Table (Perkins Delatte & Baytos, 1993: 59)

Since the mid-1980s, lesbian and gay educators and practitioners have written about raising awareness of lesbian and gay issues in a variety of contexts. This literature encompasses personal accounts (e.g., Rose, 1996), interviews with educators (e.g., McNaron, 1997), guidelines for the inclusion of LGB issues in professional practice (e.g., Imich et al., 2001), and strategies for educating professionals and students about LGB concerns (e.g., Eliason, 1995). A considerable number of academics and practitioners have documented the experiences of lesbian and gay educators (including themselves, e.g., Bohan, 1997; Cain, 1996; Kitzinger, 1989a, 1990b, 1993; McClintock, 1992; Taylor, 1994), especially with respect to coming out to students (and colleagues), and the influences this can have on their pedagogy (Dankmeijer, 1993; Garber, 1994; Harbeck, 1992; Harris, 1990; McNaron, 1997; Mintz & Rothblum, 1997; Opffer, 1994; Pugh, 1998). Opffer (1994), for instance, interviewed 17 lesbian and gay teachers and one of her conclusions was that socio-politically, 'instructors maintained a desire to change people's attitudes towards lesbians and gays' (p. 317). The desire to effect positive social change for lesbians and gay men and reduce heterosexism grounds all of the literature in this area, and provides the impetus for the guidelines and strategies discussed.

Lesbian and gay scholars have discussed the strategies they (and others) can, and do, use in their classrooms to integrate lesbian and gay curriculum content into their teaching (Allen, 1995; Buhrke, 1989; D'Augelli, 1992; Newman, 1989; Rose, 1996; Simoni, 1996, 2000): 'I make lesbians and gay men visible, by talking about them whenever they would logically come up in class discussions if we were not all under pressure all the time to engage in a conspiracy of silence. When I talk about heterosexuals, I *say* heterosexuals'

(Taylor, 1994: 293, original emphasis). In addition they provide practical advice about what professionals ‘can do about homophobia’ (e.g., Messing et al., 1984; Imich et al., 2001), and how professionals should interact with others to avoid being heterosexist (Buhrke & Douce, 1991; Schreier, 1995; McKee et al., 1994). Such advice includes the use of gender-neutral language: ‘the appropriate response for a man referring to a date with “this person I met at a party” would be “tell me more about this person,” not “Tell me about her”’ (Buhrke & Douce, 1991: 221).

Lesbian and gay professionals have offered guidance to their respective professions about how training should be integrated into professional training (see also Chapter 1). Various different ‘models’ of training on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues have been proposed; including a transtheoretical change model (Tyler et al., 1997) based upon ‘stages’ of change (from pre-contemplation to maintenance), and a model emphasising a paradigm shift from ‘tolerance’ of LGBs to ‘nurturance’ of LGBs (Schreier, 1995). Others have identified essential components of LGAT (e.g., Ross et al., 1996). The latest edition of the Division 44 sponsored series ‘Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues’ highlights the intersection of related, yet diverse concerns in lesbian and gay psychology’s consideration of education (Greene & Croom, 2000). As Beverly Greene charts in the preface (p. ix):

Academic psychologists have been challenged to make psychology curriculums more inclusive. This often involves revising course material and content such that the full spectrum of sexual orientation identity, development, and life dilemmas are represented in undergraduate and graduate courses. Similarly, individuals responsible for training in other mental health disciplines, mental health agencies, and other venues that deliver psychological services to LGBT individuals have been appropriately challenged to make training competent practitioners a priority. Many practitioners who have had no training in LGBT psychology find themselves confronted with clients they feel ill-equipped to address. They often have the desire to develop clinical competencies in this area but may be at a loss to determine how to do so or where to begin.

Thus this literature is directed with a triple focus towards (presumably lesbian and gay) academics, and trainers, and (implicitly heterosexual) professionals. This literature is (inevitably) constrained by the context in which it is produced, and the audience it is directed towards. It casts the net wide and is designed to speak to lesbian and gay male academics and practitioners, heterosexual (mental health) professionals, and the omnipresent heterosexist system. Often the emphasis is on making the case for the inclusion of lesbian and gay issues, rather than focusing on the value of different strategies (e.g., Simoni, 2000: 77). For example, Newman (1989) dedicates an entire paper to the argument for including lesbian and gay issues in the social work curriculum. McCann (2001: 87) concludes: ‘affective training packages [for therapists] need to be developed as a matter of urgency’. Obviously, presenting the rationale for *why* professional discussion of lesbian and gay concerns is important, and this has necessarily been borne out of a complete absence of (and resistance to) consideration of lesbians and gay men in a wide range of professions. This has, and continues to be, important. However, this has often resulted in scant attention being paid to the efficacy of the approaches being advocated, and it is important for lesbian and gay politics and theory that critical evaluation of our strategies takes place (V. Clarke, 2002b).

This chapter extends and develops this body of work by considering trainers’ approaches to LGAT. My intention here is to provide more *depth* to the existing literature by circumventing wider debates (for instance whether education regarding LGB issues should be separate from or integrated into professional training, e.g., Rothblum & Bond, 1996) and honing in on the process of training from trainers’ perspectives. The emphasis in this Chapter is on trainers’ reflections on their practice and the pitfalls and strengths they identify in the strategies they use when conducting training.

Data, Method and Analysis

The interview data consists of 16 interviews with trainers. Six interviews were conducted with trainers who feature in the core data set (refer also to Chapter 2). The trainers had diverse experiences of facilitating LGAT: between them they had trained 13 different

types of professional. The purpose of interviews with trainers was broader than the exploration of the pitfalls and problems they had experienced. The questions I asked trainers required them to reflect holistically on their training experiences. Questions centred on what they hoped to achieve in training, what attitudes towards lesbians and gay men they had experienced being expressed by trainees, specific incidents which they felt had been really successful or unsuccessful, and any concerns they had about the provision of LGAT. I used interviews for pragmatic reasons, and because of a feminist desire to give trainers ‘voice’ (Ribbens, 1989) and to allow them to speak in a forum where they would not be silenced by others (Crabtree et al., 1993).

The analysis used in this Chapter is thematic analysis (e.g., Banister et al., 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Wolcott, 1994). Rather than looking at the responses to the questions I asked I chose to look across topics to draw out themes that trainers felt constituted successful and (more importantly) less successful training. My analysis adopts a realist and experiential focus (c.f. Chapter 6) that is commonly employed in (feminist) research that places a high value on allowing oppressed groups to speak for themselves (e.g., Kitzinger & Willmott, 2002; F. Nelson, 1996; A. O’Connell, 1993). The themes were generated by organising and re-organising data under the various headings (Campbell & Schram, 1995). As advocated by Breakwell (1995) I use direct quotes from the data to illustrate each of the themes, and likewise the themes were suggested by the data. My intention with this analysis was to let the data speak for itself and only act as an editor of the trainers’ experiences (Breakwell, 1995; c.f. Fine, 1992).

Why Pitfalls?

My primary focus on pitfalls may appear antithetical to the aim of “celebrating” lesbians’ and gay men’s views, but I chose to do this for two reasons. Firstly, trainers provided more vivid, detailed and in depth accounts of the difficulties, weaknesses, and pitfalls of training, and the strategies they had developed for managing them. Put another way, there was simply more material in this data-set *about* pitfalls, and by exploring this I was best able to present the data-set in its entirety. Secondly, my goal (as a researcher and as a

fellow trainer) was to gain insight into how the delivery of training could be improved. This, I felt, could be best accomplished by focusing on what trainers' said about the difficulties they had experienced, rather than by emphasising (as the literature in this area often does) the 'positives'. My impression (and the feeling of those I interviewed) was that there was scant discussion amongst those providing training about the materials, the strategies and the approaches they use. Interviewees often commented that the interview was the first time they had discussed their training or reflected on their practice, other than with close friends or colleagues who acted as co-trainers. This could be because of number of reasons, including the absence of organised networks for lesbian and gay male sexuality awareness trainers in the UK. So a practical aim here was to provide a (relatively) broad overview of the training experience which would prove useful for lesbians and gay men considering undertaking (or currently providing) training, by examining the experiences trainers report and by outlining concrete, practical solutions for trainers to assist them to deal with pitfalls. Before moving on to discuss the ten pitfalls trainers identified I first contextualise them by reference to the widespread enjoyment and the overall success of training trainers described.

Enjoyment and Training Success

The trainers repeatedly commented that the training experience was personally positive for them because it is 'rewarding and valuable'. They felt 'liberated' (Andy: I13) through conducting training and gained an 'overwhelming [...] sense of kind of liberation to me really, and a sense of personal achievement' (Saul: I10). The motivation to conduct training was 'a bit like y'know one of those personal missions' (Anthony: I14). Trainers reported getting 'a lot out if pleasure out of it' (Katie: I09) and 'really get[ting] off on the challenge of it' (Zac: I15). Additionally, comments which trainers reported participants made to them also fed into their own sense of personal success in delivering training. Receiving 'compliments about my honesty and my confidence' (Sam: I02), or being told by participants it was a 'brilliant session' made trainers 'feel bloody good' (Simon: I04), as did getting a 'big round of applause at the end [...] and I got letters afterwards. I really enjoyed it' (Daniel: I05). Part of this enjoyment was their sense of efficacy, and their

feeling that by running training they are contributing to social change. Ron's aim in training was to ensure lesbians and gay men 'get a quality service, the same as everybody else', whilst Dee saw awareness training as a way to change the world: 'in a very pragmatic way [...] it's about your place in that and to remind people in any situation they're not powerless [...] Letting people see there's [...] layers of oppression and we have an ability [...] to make sure the issues are on the agenda'. Anthony felt personally rewarded when 'a group of people who have shifted in their attitudes erm and who may well then be fired up to deliver a better kind of service to gay clients' (Anthony: I14). Lou saw the success of training as being due to its 'massive seed sowing':

It's a real ripple effect. Like that wonderful thing that "teach a man to read and you teach a man. Teach a woman to read and you teach the family" [...] it's going to have a knock on effect. People are going to go back in their lives and say something next time they hear something, or think it and get brave and say it the next time (Lou: I11)

On the (rare) occasions when trainers delivered to 'powerful' groups, such as managers, they were personally 'pleased' because 'managers are even more sophisticated at ducking', and felt the training was a 'success' because additional training was booked for staff (Katie: I09). Ben (I01) even described training as a 'little revenge thing':

I love the fact that now this group of people have to be silent while I talk about sexuality and they have to listen [...] I think that is related to the fact that I was taught heterosexuality - well people attempted to impose heterosexuality upon me. I was, I felt invisible [...] and so it's about a redress of that. It's about saying "well alright, now it's time to shut up and listen"

The 'success' of training is therefore very important to trainers at both a personal and a professional level. But, as trainers often pointed out, it's not always easy to know when training has 'succeeded' in counteracting anti-lesbian and -gay feelings or 'succeeded' in promoting pro-lesbian and -gay behaviour. As Simon (I04) commented in response to my question about whether he felt training was successful in altering attitudes and behaviour:

Who knows. That's the sad thing, who knows. Erm (.) in terms of providing sexuality training to organisation the only thing you've got is your closing round and (.) evaluation forms and then occasionally you can get anecdotal stories or you might bump into someone or erm a person who has been on the training may contact a person who's

higher up and say that was damn fine training. Now whether it has a behavioural effect we'll never know because we can't shadow them.

In the absence of direct behavioural measures trainers tended to think of training having been successful if: i) they received positive feedback; ii) they felt they had developed a 'rapport' with the group; and iii) their exercises and arguments "connected" with trainees' own experiences.

(i) Positive Feedback

Trainers reported that some form of feedback was built into the sessions, in the form of a closing round asking participants what they had learned from the session, and/or written evaluation forms, and/or developing 'action plans' detailing what participants would change either personally or back in their workplaces. Trainers either implied or directly stated that 'the feedback we have got is virtually 90% positive' (Phil: I08). Trainers reported participants' feedback 'about how relaxed it's been, and how non-confrontational, and what their perception of our training was gonna be and how different it is in reality' (Simon: I04). According to trainers: 'the vast majority of people who've received the training say they've learnt things from the experience and are glad they've done it, and seen the relevance of it' (Phil: I08); 'we have had some very good reviews when we've done courses in the probation service [...] I've had people ring me later when they've moved on somewhere else and say "look I thought that was really good and I want it to happen where I'm working now"' (Katie: I09). Zac (I15) described his participants making comments like 'this is the best thing that's ever happened on this course, I really feel like that's challenged me'. Thus, positive feedback from the group was seen by trainers as an important indicator of 'successful' training.

ii) Developing 'Rapport'

Trainers felt that rapport developed between themselves and the group when there was honesty and openness between group members and themselves, and also when they used humour. The group being 'open' and 'willing' to embrace an LGB perspective was

viewed as important for the sessions outcome. Developing a rapport could entail meeting ‘with them before hand’ (Ron: I03), rather than simply arriving to train a group of people which one has no prior knowledge of. Assessing the groups ‘openness’ to learning and (potentially) altering their attitudes towards LGBs prepares trainers for the ‘type’ of approach they will need and also alerts them to the likely outcome of training. Trainers reported that the sessions which went ‘really well’ were the ones ‘when people really do actually start to be quite honest and open up’ (Ben: I01), because trainers felt that generally ‘people are quite wary [...] of saying the wrong thing, y'know and of wanting to be seen to be right on’ (Ron: I03). Trainers felt that training was working well when participants ‘have brought up the issues themselves’, because this gives trainers evidence that trainees ‘want to think about it’ (Emma: I12). Trainers displayed the lay and popular psychological notion that ‘disclosing’ (negative) attitudes about lesbians and gay men provides raw material for them to ‘work through’. This position was exemplified by Zac: ‘the best pieces of training are ones where people are freed up enough to be assertive’ (Zac: I15). Training ‘was quite good’ when trainees were ‘very honest about their opinions’ (Phil: I08). We can see in the extract below, that Ben attributed ‘effectiveness’ to the police officers in this particular training session being ‘very very open’.

I felt that the sessions we did with the police were far more effective, I really felt that we got somewhere with those. They evaluated incredibly highly people were being very very open, and what they all said was that they really respected the trainers for not jumping down their throat and not telling them off, and not making them feel nervous and insecure and as if they were being judged [...] yet to an extent that can only happen by accepting their homophobia (Ben: I01)

This extract highlights that openness is related, by trainers, to ‘accepting their homophobia’. This position implies that acceptance of homophobic views is the first step to overcoming those views. Honesty from participants was viewed as getting to the heart of the issue, and meant participants were displaying their “real” feelings. Trainers sometimes felt that ‘the best training I've gone I think has been where it has been “right yeah come on be homophobic” [...] let's just be honest about it, and let's just understand it’ (Ben: I01). Explicit homophobia was not often encountered by trainers because they suspected that people with strongly heterosexist views (‘really offensive people’ - Katie) absented themselves from attendance at LGAT sessions. As Katie (I09) said, ‘There are

always people who have gone to the dentist - that's a nice safe excuse, isn't it? Y'know, "sorry I've got a dental appointment"". Nonetheless, several trainers had experienced situations in which overtly anti-lesbian and anti-gay sentiments were expressed. Anthony (I14) described one instance:

There were two scally lads -this is in Liverpool- there were two scally lads [...] who just kept feeding off each other in terms of their homophobia and their lager loutish attitudes and they were expressing some really offensive attitudes - that gay people should be shot, and gay people y'know, clearly spread AIDS and y'know promiscuous, and y'know all the negative stereotypes that sort of, you'd expect of the worst of kind of straight lager-lout-type-footie fan.

Explicit homophobia did not necessarily result in the destruction of 'rapport', and could indeed be used to enhance it. Several trainers talked about the value of having anti-lesbian and anti-gay views voiced in training sessions: 'some of the negative stuff, I think, is quite positive. I always feel it's positive to hear it, cos I think [...] if you do have a bigot saying stuff they're probably voicing it for a number of other people who are too quiet, too nervous, too liberal whatever, to be saying it' (Anthony: I14). In the trainers' talk the honesty of participants and homophobia were closely linked, trainers did not assume that 'honesty' would reveal a genuinely pro-lesbian and -gay position from participants. 'Political correctness' constituted a rhetorical smoke-screen, and thus getting beyond this to underlying homophobic ideology was seen as an improvement. Further, trainers also conceptualised homophobia as 'resistance', and felt that 'it can be a gift because it can give you more chance to give more examples, work though it etc' (Lou: I11). Sam described an incident in training where 'someone said that "your role is to convert people to homosexuality"', and he felt that 'it's actually an advantage to have a person like that in the group, because it demonstrates to other participants how extreme people's views are' (Sam: I02). Therefore, overt homophobia from participants was viewed by trainers as a 'success', not only because this was evidence of delving to the heart of the matter, but because it also provided a positive pedagogic opportunity.

Humour was seen, by (male) trainers, as an important element of successful training, as long as 'you don't sort of end up just playing it for laughs and putting yourself down' (Ron: I03). Some trainers felt that with certain audiences they could be 'the funny man at the front', because that way of portraying (particularly) gay men, but also lesbian and gay

issues ‘connects’ (Simon: I04b) with the group. The trainers thought ‘it helps’ (Ron: I03), and felt that ‘to be over serious and stuff all the time is non-productive’ (Sam: I02). The comments from these male trainers indicated that a brand of (sometimes) camp humour used with predominantly female participants added to the ‘success’ of training because it relaxed participants and made the trainers seem more personable. The related danger of humour, as pointed out by Ron however, was that participants could laugh *at* gay men which could run the risk of being counter productive. Another more diffuse function of humour was expressed as the participants enjoying the whole experience of the session, and being given ‘permission’, by trainers, to laugh.

You have to do that little bit of ice breaking and work to get them to relax because for most of them it is, “Oh my God, this is about sexuality” [...] It’s really important very early on to sort of break that and say “you can laugh, you can enjoy it”. [...] I think if you can justifiably buy them into that straight away it leads to successful training (Phil: I08)
For Phil, breaking the ice via encouraging participants to ‘laugh’, and therefore relax, was essential for successful training.

iii) Connecting exercises and arguments with trainee experience

Simply being an ‘out’ gay trainer –irrespective of the activities of training itself- was seen as a feature of successful training by many trainers. Trainers often felt that their lesbian or gay sexuality constituted ‘a very powerful position to be in’ in training (Saul: I10), and ‘wonder[ed]’ whether the success of training hinges on ‘just meeting the trainer’ (Ben: I01). The trainers drew upon the relationship between themselves and the group, to account for their success. For instance, Ben remarked: ‘I think quite often that we might be their first experience [...] of sort of out gay people [...] the fact that I’m a gay man I think is pivotal to the training’ (Ben: I01). Saul (I10) was more explicit in the impact of being a gay man on trainees: ‘it’s a very very powerful thing, that changes attitudes’. This is a lay version of the social psychological concept of the ‘contact hypothesis’ which posits that the most effective way to reduce tension and hostility between groups is to bring them into systematic contact with each other (after R. Brown 1995: 236). Other research, however, has suggested that contact alone is not enough to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954). According to the traditional social psychological literature four optimal criteria are needed: social and institutional support; acquaintance potential (i.e. frequent contact); equal status; and co-operation (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Trainers did not rely

on contact alone. One argument which was discussed as being particularly effective by Ben (I01) was the idea that heterosexism affects everyone (see also this Section in Chapter 4). In the extract below Ben (MT1) describes how he deploys this position in sessions:

One that I do find very effective when I'm talking about the where does homophobia come and the kind of shared experiences of homophobia -always works with groups of straight men- is to say to them "right how many people in this room have ever been called a poof, a queer, an arse bandit and turd burglar or whatever, even if it's just a joke how many of you people [have been] called this". They all put their hand up and I then go on to say "oh well that's strange isn't it?" [...] The threat of homophobia is used to police heterosexual masculinity. "Are you coming out tonight to drink fifteen pints of lager? No I am staying in to cook a flan. You poof!". The threat of homophobia is used constantly against straight men, and so what I'm trying to do there [...] is actually to sort of make them see themselves as victims. And sometimes you do get straight men to say "Yes I was picked on at school, and I was called gay for years" and to say "Ah right so whenever your not behaving like a proper bloke" [...] you get threatened with this exclusion yeah? That's how it's taught [...it's] allowing them to be victims yeah? It's allowing even their homophobia to be a part of their victimisation.

We can see from this extract that Ben (MT1) provides a very detailed account of the value of the 'heterosexism affects everyone' argument (in this case heterosexual men). The success of this argument hinges upon it being related to the participant's own experiences – a clear illustration of one of the key elements trainers see as being implicated in successful training (see also ii) above). It is not the argument per se, but the personal impact it might have on (some) participants which makes it 'effective' for Ben.

Trainers, in general, felt that 'the bits that seem to go down best are the bits when they are not left to their own devices' (Daniel: I05), that is when participants are engaged in exercises and structured components of sessions (see also Chapter 4). In comparison to trainers finding unpredictability difficult (see below), success and exercises were closely linked together. The exercises which trainers specifically mentioned as being successful were: the language exercise; life stories; the 'do you need treatment?' questionnaire which inverts questions usually asked of lesbians and gay men (e.g. 'what caused your heterosexuality?'); and the 'rights' exercise which asks participants to compare which activities are legally and socially acceptable for lesbians and gay men and for heterosexuals. (Trainers were not, however, directly asked which exercises worked well

and which did not in interview.) The language exercise, Ron (I03) felt, was successful because it ‘almost ran itself really and I think that was the beauty of it’. He remarked that the participants commented that the stereotypes that had generated were ‘all ridiculous but we also have these ideas’, and the exercise ‘worked well’ because participants could ‘work through that for themselves’. Lou (I11) felt that one of the best examples of an exercise having a dramatic (‘magical’) positive impact on a participant was:

The example of the guy coming in all huffy and puffy and saying [...] “why do people get angry, there’s really no need for lesbians and gays to get angry” and [...] there was steam coming out of his ears after that questionnaire, it was just a magical moment, it really was [...] I thought great I’ll be turning him round in half an hour and yes I did, it was just wonderful. He was sat there and he just sort of came back in and said “I understand, how dare they”

We can see in this extract how Lou attributes the shift in this participant’s perception of lesbians and gay men to the ‘questionnaire’ which, in her account, enabled him to see the world from a lesbian and gay perspective rather than a heterosexist one. Emily (I07) reported the ‘best experiences’ during her training cohered around the ‘rights’ exercise, because the group were ‘actually having a real debate’. She recollected there were ‘at least two occasions that just went extremely well, and evaluations said “it was a really useful discussion, we never have this chance to have this discussion”’. Further, Ron (I03) found that ‘stuff around legislation’ and ‘institutionalised prejudices’ have ‘quite an impact’, because trainees are often ‘shocked [...] that there are discriminatory laws in place’.

Finally, then, training is successful when it enables participants to relate to lesbian and gay male experiences and gain (some) understanding about LGB lives which link to their own experiences. Phil described training being ‘good’ then the ‘trainer is actually drawing on the reality as well as the political, the more abstract level of training really’ (Phil: I08). Grounding the training experience either within the ‘reality’ of lesbians’ and gay men’s lives and/or relating that to heterosexuals’ lived experiences was seen as key. Thus success is dependent on the ‘embeddedness’ (Donaldson, 1978, cited in Epstein, 1993: 104) of LGB experience trainers can create in participants’ own experiences. In the words of Ben, training hinges on: ‘saying that the best learning tools that people have are their own experiences [...] what we’re doing is we’re tying y’know somebody’s feeling awkward when they were 14 to homophobia’ (Ben: I01).

THE PITFALLS

I now examine ten difficulties trainers raised about the process of LGAT, and solutions to them, or strategies for managing them. These are: a) administration and preparation; b) ‘passive resistance’ from trainees; c) problematic aspects of ‘the personal’; d) liberalism; e) religious arguments; f) ‘race’ and ethnicity; g) disgust at gay male sex; h) stereotypes and diversity; i) unpredictability of sessions and trainer experience; and lastly j) insufficient knowledge and other anxieties.

a) Administration and Preparation

i) Money

Lack of money for training was something trainers' identified as being problematic: as Saul described it 'budgets are squeezed'. They discussed the small (or non-existent) budgets provided for LGAT, both within organisations, and also inadequate payment for 'freelance' trainers. Trainers felt that LGAT 'doesn't have equality' (Saul: I10) with other diversity issues, and that it 'will always be bottom of the list' (Zac: I15). Trainers reported that (partly) due to restricted or very limited financial provision for LGAT, the sessions they provided were often short (a few hours or a day at most) and they were concerned that 'there's not enough time to do it properly' (Zac: I15). Some of the trainers worked for funded organisations (e.g., NHS funded sexual health projects) and provided LGAT as part of their work remit, so external organisations were not charged by them for training. These trainers remarked that the reason that they were invited to provide training to outside agencies was because these agencies were aware that 'homosexuals do it free' and are motivated by economics to thinking lets "get them in cos it's not going to cost us" (Ben: I01). Other trainers provided training on a freelance basis and discussed the financial sacrifices they were forced to make because 'there's only so much money' (Anthony: I14) provided for LGAT. Anthony described the difficulty of wanting to run courses properly and always co-train with a lesbian but the monies allocated to LGAT making this not 'economically viable' for him. He reported feeling 'force[d]' into a position where he had to 'say "well I'll only have half the fee because my commitment to the subject is so great" [...] or you say "well I'll do it on my own"' (Anthony: I14), rather than bringing in a co-trainer.

ii) Preparation with co-trainers and the organisation

Trainers felt that some of the difficulties that arise are more effectively dealt with if training is conducted 'mob handed' (Katie: I09). They discussed co-trainers (e.g. two for a group of 15) being important because they provided support, and the 'opportunity to off load' (I7: Emily). However, they felt that co-trainers had to be people 'you get on with and [have] got a similar view of the thing' (Anthony: I14), so 'you're not going to trip someone else up' (Katie: I09). On the (rare) occasions that trainers discussed having had differences of opinion with a co-trainer, they felt this had negative consequences for training. Katie recounted having an argument with her co-trainer in front of 'an

absolutely horrified course' about whether homosexuality was innate or acquired: 'that was a learning experience for me - don't argue with your co-trainer on the day.' Similarly, working with someone new, having an unpredictable co-trainer, or working with someone who does not adhere to the training schedule can lead to dissatisfaction with the session: 'I called it short to keep on time, and then would you believe it my co-trainer doesn't do that [...] I was slightly miffed with myself that I didn't y'know do what I felt I needed to do' (Lou: I11). Thus, discussions with co-trainers prior to conducting a session (especially for the first time) can be a vital element to reduce potential problems with the training itself.

The trainers were generally outsiders going into organisations just to run that particular session (which appears to be a common feature of LGAT in the UK, McCann, 2001). Trainers felt that potential problems could be resolved if programmes were 'checked out with the course tutors' (Sam: I02), and they met 'with tutors [...] to discuss the issues' (Dee: I06). This, Ron (I03) felt 'always help[ed]' to facilitate the smooth process of training. Though planning meetings can tailor courses to particular groups needs, they can also remove misunderstandings about the nature and content of training. For instance, publicity for LGAT courses can be made clearer for those planning to attend the course. Ambiguous wording of course titles and content (e.g. 'helping young people to work out their sexuality'), which can result in participants having inaccurate assumptions about courses (often that LGB issues will be a minor element of training, or that training is purely information provision about LGB's) can be reworked prior to the actual session. Pre-training meetings can also allay concerns, for trainers, about practical aspects of the training. As Sam (I02) explained, it is important for trainers to be 'going in forewarned is forearmed about what to expect'.

iii) Materials

Everything that possibly could go wrong had gone wrong, arrived at the place and none of our material, although we'd posted it on ahead and was assured it would be ready, was photocopied so we had to stand in this room and do our own photocopying which- with people wanting to come in and we had to say 'no you can't use it cos we're about to do training'. The computer had gone so we couldn't have power point, one of the guys was running around like a fool trying to find another computer and eventually I said 'we'll get

it onto overhead projectors I'll use that', we couldn't get into the rooms [until] five minutes before we were about to train [...] it's a disaster. (Lou I11, p.16 & 17)

Lou described some of the hazards associated with asking others to prepare materials in advance, and problems that can arise with technical equipment. Trainers felt that having 'more than enough material to use' (Daniel: I05) was important to circumvent problems. If a trainer is faced with a reticent or uncommunicative group then exercises may take much less than their allotted time (often the length of an exercise is dictated by its 'processing' and subsequent group discussion, rather than the task itself) and thus additional materials are useful. Preparing enough handouts, evaluation forms, and having ample flip-chart paper and pens, overhead transparencies and back-up materials (see Lou's extract above) is another aspect of this. Collating materials from other trainers and sharing successful (and unsuccessful) experiences with particular materials or exercises can also overcome potential difficulties, although this may be difficult outside immediate groups of colleagues, as Zac hinted: 'I'm concerned that trainers keep information to themselves [...] they don't share'. As well as preparing materials, trainers discussed needing to prepare themselves for training by dealing with pre-training nerves and anxieties, and 'do massive breathing and grounding' (Lou: I11). Envisaging a difficult training experience can enable trainers to 'prepare your arguments in your head ready for it, or you draw on your experience from before' (Phil: I08). They discussed the need to 'psyche yourself up' (Phil: I08), and think of responses to possible difficult arguments from group members in advance.

iv) Location

The location in which the training takes place can cause difficulties for trainers, if it is not a 'nice container' (Dee: I06), where trainers have 'got more control' (Dee: I06) than participants. In the extract below Dee talked of the importance of pro-lesbian and –gay surroundings (i.e. a Lesbian and Gay Centre):

We always try and train here [...the] most important reason from my point of view is that this is the lesbian and gay centre. People have a lot of myths and stereotypes about what happens here, when you tell people on the phone that it's down an alley way, you can virtually hear people going "oh my God I bet they're fucking everywhere. I wonder what will be happening in the toilets!" and people have this idea that it's going to be a really

seedy horrible place, and I think if you bring people through the door to see that it's a nice space, and we're nice ordinary people, in some ways you don't have to do anything with them, you can just sit them there and give them coffee all day, because they've seen that it's not this seedy horrible disgusting place full of perverts (Dee I06, p. 10).

Conversely, if trainers work within an environment which is seen as anti-lesbian or –gay (trainers commonly mentioned police headquarters as an exemplar of this) then the delivery of training may be negatively effected because they feel uncomfortable, and as though they are ‘walking into the enemy lines’ (Lou: I11).

Physical aspects of the training environment can also create difficulties for trainers if not properly organized. For instance: having enough seating, having chairs adequately arranged (usually in a horse-shoe shape); having a large enough room; having a room which is not too large for the group; having a room with good acoustics; good ventilation and heating and so on. For example, when conducting LGAT12 our task as trainers was hindered by having a long narrow room, in which the large number of participants were spread in very wide rows down the length of it. Having a location that can be adapted to the needs of the group can reduce difficulties. For instance, if trainers on arriving at a venue find that a group is too large, having two adjacent rooms so the group can be divided (but the trainers can liaise with each other if necessary) is useful. Additionally, have smaller rooms or quiet spaces where small group work can take place is also advantageous. Having a room that has nearby refreshments and toilets, and is in a location unlikely to be disturbed by other users of the building is useful for longer periods of training. If trainers are in a venue chosen by the tutors or group organizer it is often helpful to have a representative from the organization on hand (either within the room or available within the building) so that if any administrative difficulties arise they can be easily contacted. Furthermore, tutors and organizers can address any specific organizational, policy, or procedural questions regarding LGB issues the group may raise, that trainers may not be aware of (e.g. whether a workplace has an equal opportunities policy including sexual orientation).

In practice trainers often do not have much control over their training environment, but they can employ different strategies to make a less than ideal training environment more

hospitable. Welcoming group members to an LGB centre, for instance, and directing them to refreshments etc may help put participants at ease. Whilst checking the venue (including ease of access to it, sign posting and so on) beforehand, rearranging the room if necessary and dealing with ‘house keeping’ before the onset of the session can evade potential problems before they arise. Trainers should also consider how they will greet participants arriving at the venue (whether they choose, for instance, to chat informally with the group prior to the session) and their use of the space in this, i.e., standing at the front of the room, moving to the entrance, or sitting within the group as they arrive.

b) Passive Resistance

‘[Trainees] go off for coffee, and they’ll come back 10 minutes late, or their mobile phone will ring, or they’ll get a pager message and they have to go off’ (Dee: I06)

‘They sat through it all, and quite non-verbally the message was resistance and criticism’ (Zac: I15)

Although there may be genuine reasons why trainees absent themselves from training sessions, non-attendance and non-engagement with the content of LGAT was something trainers’ discussed being problematic and frustrating. Trainers universally attributed the behaviours Dee and Zac described above to trainees’ unwillingness to engage in discussion about lesbian and gay issues, heterosexism and homophobia, hence I have labelled this theme ‘passive resistance’. Trainers discussed that when trainees behaved in these ways (returning late after coffee, sitting in silence) training became difficult to manage because they were ‘very aware of the blocking presence of these people’ (Zac: I15), even though the trainees were not actively or overtly objecting to the content of training.

Trainers discussed finding that ‘challenging practical stuff is much harder’, because ‘you can never be a hundred percent sure’ (Dee: I06) of the individuals’ motives. This caused difficulties for trainers because it covertly implies that participants are not taking the training seriously. Further, trainers reported the disruption this causes to the smooth running of the session, when for instance ‘suddenly his pager goes off and he takes a

message' (Lou: I11). Whilst training myself, I have had experiences where a participant (once the session content and objectives have been explained) suddenly has to leave early, and it is difficult to ascertain the reasons for their hasty desire to depart. Group discussion going off topic can be another form of (relatively) passive resistance in training. Within the larger group where the trainer is present this is not as problematic as within small group discussion where the facilitator(s) are not often present. One trainer described this difficulty: 'you leave them with a very very focused plan of what they've got to do [...] you'll go and visit them 10 minutes in and they're talking about internal politics usually' (Dee: I06).

The sorts of behaviours the trainers I interviewed described are similar to those identified by multicultural educators (Goodman, 1998; Higginbotham, 1996; Locke & Kiselica, 1999). They report that passive resistance is manifest in students only being 'marginally cooperative... [they] come to class late or not pay attention', and it is difficult to manage 'because it is so covert, it can be hard to address and bring out into the open' (Chan & Treacy, 1996: 216). Chan and Treacy (1996) posit that direct challenges to passive resistance are ineffective as 'students often deny that they are being resistance to the material or to the class'. Strategies that have been suggested for overcoming passive resistance and nonengagement include 'setting a tone of open inquiry' (Chan & Treacy, 1996: 217) and creating a good rapport and establishing trust with a group (Goodman, 1998). Other practical tips for trainers managing 'passive resistance' could include simply asking trainees to switch off mobile phones before the start of training (therefore avoiding the trainer's desire to 'flip' (Lou: I11) if they subsequently ring), and emphasising the importance of the topic from the outset. Sessions could be restructured so that individual group members would be unable to remain silent throughout training (i.e., through the use of pair work).

c) **'The Personal'**

Training can be personally problematic for trainers as they felt that 'you're taking yourself onto a stage somehow, and people can take pot shots at you' (Katie: I09), because 'the comments that people make [about lesbians and gay men], they're making

about you, they might be making it generally, but they are making it about you' (Emily: I07). There were a number of issues that trainers discussed, which highlighted the personal being difficult within training. Trainers felt there could be an element of 'voyeurism' (Anthony: I14) on the part of trainees, and sometimes felt that *as* lesbians and *as* gay men they were on display for participants, like 'exhibits' (Katie: I09), or 'some strange thing at the zoo' (Katie: I09). Trainers reported not wanting to feel as though they are 'in a zoo' (Simon: I04) when they conduct training, but they were aware that because they are personally invested in LGAT there is the potential for 'roving nerve catching' (Katie: I09), i.e., trainees making personal comments that they find upsetting or angering.

All the trainers were clear that 'personal experience can be quite effective used appropriately' (Emily: I07), as it can illustrate particular points, making training vivid and making the experiences of lesbians and gay men "real", and bringing lesbian and gay realities alive. Trainers discussed coming out to groups as unproblematic, as they had (generally) formulated a 'policy' about whether they explicitly mentioned their sexuality to groups, or not. Some trainers 'always' verbally came out to participants, 'I'm out immediately I'm not ambiguous about it [...] it's crucial' (Lou: I11), others ('instantly') outed themselves indirectly by saying where they worked, 'say[ing] "I work in a gay men's sexual health project"' (Ron: I03), whilst others 'assume they make that assumption, I don't tell them' (Katie: I09). Some trainers were more strategic about coming out as lesbian or gay, 'I pick and choose the moment, and I decide how I'm going to do it' (Saul: I10). Trainers reported feeling that not coming out to groups would collude with heterosexist assumptions and be a 'a missed opportunity, [a] shame' (Emma: I12).

Unlike coming out, trainers reported some experiences are *too* personal, they 'won't open my heart and soul up', and they are 'certainly not going to say what I put what where' (Lou: I11). Trainers emphasised 'my private life is my private life' (Sam: I02). Getting "too personal", for instance telling their coming out stories (Dee and Anthony) in training, was discussed as being something that would undermine professionalism and be

negative; it could ‘set you up as a trainer to be somebody who’s got a chip on their shoulder’ (Dee: I06), or it ‘can just piss off participants who think that you’re on some kind of therapy in terms of like divulging everything about yourself’ (Emily: I07). Trainers discussed being ‘too personal’ could have the negative effect that: ‘people find it hard to challenge me, and certainly as a trainer you need to be challenged’ (Dee: I06). Others were ‘not prepared to be that vulnerable with straight people’ (Katie: I09), or suggested that ‘it takes me away out of the role of a trainer into being the subject’ (Anthony: I14). Discussing personal experience was considered to be ‘treading a fine line’ (Emily: I07). It should be brought into training ‘very carefully’ (Lou: I11), as ‘an illustration of a point’, rather than used as ‘a piece of self indulgence’, or in terms of merely ‘here’s my life story’ (Lou: I11). Some elements of personal experience trainers described as being discrediting and reinforcing “stereotypes” such as ‘come[ing] out as an ex-alcoholic’ (Lou: I11), or gay male trainers bolstering the idea they are promiscuous by mentioning ‘the fact that we have an open relationship, and put it about quite a bit’ (Daniel: I05). Trainers described using information about themselves in a way they perceived as a ‘positive sense’ (Daniel: I05): for instance, Daniel talked about emphasising the stability of his 30 years relationship by omitting mentioning that his relationship with his partner is not a “conventional” monogamous one.

Mentioning personal experiences in training, were viewed as problematic if they felt it violated their professional role. For instance, Katie (I: 09) reported that ‘the worst thing’ she was asked by a trainee was ‘how I got my child’. She ‘found that profoundly intrusive’ and was ‘so angry’ because she was personally implicated in the group’s view that ‘they had come to be trained in how to deal with lesbians and gay men’ and therefore she was (as an individual) ‘up for grabs’. Katie described dealing with the question by saying “‘if I was to ask you to describe the mechanics by which you became pregnant would you enjoy that in front of this group’”. In this example, being asked to reveal personal experiences caught the trainer’s ‘nerve’ because ‘at the end of the day, it’s where the personal becomes political’ (Katie: I09). Moreover, trainers can find themselves revealing too much of their own experiences when trainees talk about their own experiences with lesbians and gay men. For example, a participant in a session conducted

by Ben (I: 01) ‘disclose[d] the fact that he's been abused [by a man] as a child’. Ben described how he dealt with this situation which he felt ‘really hit a raw nerve’:

‘I relied on my, I went to my own personal experience on an occasion when I didn't really think I should have done [...] I felt pressured into reveal[ing] my first sexual experiences were not consensual [...] to an extent that was establishing a connection with him but it was like “ooh” [...] it was playing for very high stakes y'know [...] to an extent “yes that wonderful there's fucking openness going on here” but it's very very high cost openness’ (Ben: I01, p. 22)

Ben felt that this was ‘the hardest’ incident he had had to deal with in training, and because he ‘relied’ on his personal knowledge he ended up feeling ‘quite exposed’. Personal experiences are an important part of LGAT and experiential learning. For trainers there is the issue of feeling ‘pressured’ into revealing too much personal information and potentially feeling exposed and vulnerable. Thus tension is created between professional and personal roles and the boundaries between the two can be blurred or transgressed if, for instance, personal information on highly sensitive topics is divulged.

The disclosure of *trainees*’ personal experiences in training was also discussed as being problematic. The “sharing” of information by group members can be difficult for trainers to deal with especially if they become upset during training. Trainers felt that there are elements of ‘risk’ (Zac: I15) involved within experiential training (perhaps) especially when it relates to sexuality. For example, Katie (I: 09) described a difficult experience with a woman who became upset because an exercise was ‘too personal’:

I actually saw this woman out of the corner of my eye getting pink in the face and getting quite upset [...] and then I said [...] ‘I want you to talk to each about where you got your messages from’ [about sexuality...] at this point this woman got up burst into tears and ran out of the room [...] I went and found her and she was sitting in a corner crying and she said ‘that was too painful I couldn’t do it’ [...] I suppose I hadn’t until that point thought about the impact of doing that on people [...] and I can only assume that she was an abuse survivor (Katie: I09, p.32)

Zac (I15) had a similar response from a trainee after showing an excerpt from the film version of *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* [by Jeanette Winterson, 1985] where a young lesbian gets ‘exorcised’ by her over-zealous religious mother and her minister, ‘one woman walked out’ because ‘it tapped into her own experience of abuse’. When

participants have particular experiences as heterosexuals or strong investments in their statuses as heterosexuals or christians then trainers may have to deal with emotional responses from them. Attempts to undermine a heterosexual perspective are often met with accusations from heterosexuals that we are being ‘excluding’, ‘confrontational’, or ‘silencing’ (Kitzinger, 1996: 136). As well as the difficulties associated with heterosexual ‘bashing’, trainers felt that ‘if you start christian bashing then people get all upset, and it just becomes counter productive’ (Ben: I01). This occurred in response to the *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* clip Zac (I: 15) used in training:

The group [...] were quite outraged [...] ‘How could you show us that, what kind of people do you think we are’, so I said ‘so you’re feeling angry then, you’re feeling quite cross’, [...] and so they stormed and raged [... ‘we’re] appalled that you could even think that it’s okay to show a person something like that, it’s absolutely disgraceful, demonizing christians’ (Zac: I15, p. 10, see also Section E)

Trainers talked about the difficulties associated with trainees coming out as lesbian and gay in the training context, as well as “coming out” as christians. The role of ‘co-trainer’ or as Anthony put it ‘surrogate trainer’ may be unwanted by the group member and they may feel ‘obliged to be the voice’ for all lesbians, for instance, if the trainer is male (Anthony: I14). Trainers discussed being ‘very very reluctant to encourage’ (Ben: I01) lesbian and gay trainees to come out because of this, and reported suggesting to heterosexual participants “‘if you want to know about coming out here are some books where you can read people’s coming out stories, you don’t need to pester Mary and John in the group”” (Anthony: I14). Additionally, another LGB member of the group may undermine the trainer’s position by contradicting their views. Consider an example from field-notes of my experience within a small group of foster carers (LGAT 11) where one of them came out as lesbian.

I felt she was at times very uncomfortable with having come out. She said ‘I’m not sure this training is relevant to me really’ and voiced defensive liberal arguments relating to her role as a foster carer: ‘I’m just a person’ and ‘we’re just two ladies looking after kids’. After a discussion about cultural stereotypes about lesbians she said to me in the break ‘they’ve cut my hair too short, I didn’t want it this short’ which suggested to me that she was anxious about (partly) fulfilling the mannish lesbian stereotype that the group had discussed. I was not sure how to support her personally whilst challenge her

sameness argument about lesbian parents – which was undermining my argument that lesbians and gay men are distinct social groups within society and are oppressed on that basis. I didn't feel as though this lesbian was an 'ally'.

Group members talking about their personal experiences of lesbians or gay men, which contradict or undermine the position of the trainer, can be problematic for the trainer to counter. Trainees talking from personal experience can function as a bottom-line argument, that trainers find difficult to challenge except via using contradictory personal experience. This does not elevate the discussion beyond the level of competing individual experiences and can undermine the trainer's 'experiential authority' as an expert on lesbian and gay issues (Kitzinger, 1994). Consider, for instance, an extract taken from LGAT 11 with foster carers (short responses from the trainer are indicated in brackets in the trainees talk) :

- Gladys I know a bisexual and she asked me to have a relationship with her (mhm) and erm she's a friend (mm) and she's married (yeah) and I'm married and she said that to me (mm) and that's how I get to know that she was having a relationship with this other woman
- FT1: Mm mm but I mean that's kind of the same if a bloke approached you and you say well you know 'I'm married and this is the situation'
- Gladys You think it's the same I wouldn't see it as the same (no?) cos I would see it as man he erm is is that kind of a person but then again it's the woman's feeling isn't it it's what attracts a person to another one (mhm absolutely) I could understand a man coming up to me and say 'well I fancy you I know you're married' and whatever (mhm) but to have a woman coming up and saying that to you would be very strange it was very strange and frightening to me
- FT1: Mm mm yeah I mean it's like a lot of erm heterosexual men kind of worry that every every gay man is going to kind of fancy them erm I think that's one of erm the ways in which erm kind of men how homophobia's played out really because men kind of worry that erm that you know there's this predatory gay man's going to you know come and get them erm which obviously isn't the case, but it's like if you were to say well 'no I'm not interested' then you know they'd go 'oh okay that's fine' sort of thing (LGAT11: p. 19-20)

In this example Gladys has talked about how 'strange' and 'frightening' it was to be propositioned by a female friend. The trainer felt this was 'quite tricky' 'because she was drawing on her personal experiences, and I couldn't say "well you didn't feel scared and frightened"' (Niki: I16). When trainers are confronted with bottom-line arguments based on personal experience from trainees they sometimes draw on their own experience to counter it. Ben (I:01) did this when he told the group that his first sexual experiences with

men weren't consensual to establish a 'connection' whilst stressing that it 'doesn't mean that I hate all gay men [...] and I don't think that that made me be gay at all'. Conversely, trainers can attempt to 'put some distance' between that particular trainee's experience and lesbian and gay issues more generally. For instance, the trainer from LGAT11 (above) talked about presenting the argument 'about "oh well heterosexual men think all gay men fancy them and that's not the case"', to counter Gladys' "homophobia" indirectly because 'in the training session you couldn't say "well you're being homophobic stop it" because that would be too challenging, too direct and [...] interactionally it'd be really hard' (Niki: I16).

Other strategies trainers discussed using to alleviate difficulties associated with trainees and 'the personal' included trying to elide the risk of trainees becoming upset by 'prepar[ing] people [...] you say "this is private, you never have to show it to anybody, we just want you to think about it [...] we're not gonna ask you to share what happened to you"' (Katie: I09). Another strategy for reducing the potential for trainee upset would be providing clear and detailed information prior to the course about the content, 'we learned to send a blurb out after that, to send a description of this is what it will be about' (Katie: I09); others advocated "time out": 'I said "okay well we're going to take a break now, let's have a break and we'll come back and we'll carry it further"' (Zac: I15). The specific context and nature of what group members say or do would dictate which approach the trainer chooses.

d) Liberalism

'The essence of liberalism is to sit on the fence, avoid taking sides, to denounce polarization, confrontation and the use of force. It is the perfect tool for the oppressor's use' (Kathie Sarachild, 1974, quoted in Kramarae & Treichler, 1992: 231)

Liberalism is not always positive and can be deployed as a method of social control (Kitzinger, 1989b). The idea that 'everyone's an individual' embedded in liberalism has been described as a form of 'benign neglect' and a 'commitment to cultural neutrality' (McDonough, 1998: 467). The trainers drew on two 'types' of liberalism, the common-

sense notion of liberalism as a broadminded non-prejudicial perspective, and a more negative view of liberal ideology as a way of masking prejudice. Trainers viewed liberal open-minded attitudes as a desired *result* of training, but a hindrance otherwise, because participants were said to espouse liberalism to ‘demonstrate...that they don’t have a problem’ (Ben: I01). All the trainers were wary of this, as Simon said, ‘if everyone’s too right on [...] I just think “mmm”’. The trainers gave many examples of liberal sentiments expressed by heterosexual groups members, such as: ‘everything’s okay cos there’s more people on TV [...] everything’s hunky-dory’ (Simon: I04); ‘I don’t have to make a fuss about what I am, so why do you have to make a fuss about what you are?’ (Katie: I09); ‘the world’s moved on, and we’ve got characters in East Enders and things. We’re a lot more laid back that I don’t think this is an issue any more’ (Dee: I06); ‘some of my best friends are gay’ (Saul: I10); ‘there’s not a homophobic bone in my body’ (Ben: I01); ‘I treat everyone the same’; and ‘I don’t go round shouting that I’m heterosexual’ (Katie: I09). It has been noted that:

‘A common reaction among educated people with a liberal worldview is that sexual orientation doesn’t make any difference. Frequently we hear statements which begin, “It doesn’t matter who one sleeps with...” This attitude ignores that for many lesbians and gay men, sexual orientation has had a profound impact on their lives.’ (Messing et al., 1984: 67)

Trainers described the common verbalising of liberal views by trainees as: ‘a load of crap and really dangerous’ (Lou: I11); as something which ‘makes me very frustrated’ (Dee: I06); and their personal reactions as including ‘I want to smack people when they say that’ (Saul: I10). Liberalism was often seen by trainers as a mask or smoke screen - ‘liberal defences’ (Andy: I13) - to hide underlying heterosexism. Similarly, Daniel (I05) said that ‘it’s less easy [...] for educated people to voice prejudices about lesbians and gays publicly any more. They may still have them but they’re subsumed as it were’. Trainers suggested reasons why participants ‘keep this mantra going of, y’know, I’m a nice liberal’ (Ben: I01). Saul (I10), for instance speculated about why group members try to make sexuality a ‘non-issue’:

‘What they’re actually saying is “I don’t feel comfortable with this”, but they aren’t brave enough to actually say, “I need to learn”. What they’re actually doing is [...] really colluding with the heterosexist hegemony that’s been around

y'know forever. [...] Sorry, phooey, it is not a non-issue - it is a major issue for a lot of people [...] They've got a very surface understanding of what's going on and it's usually about providing an excuse so they can disengage so they don't have to deal with it'.

Ben also said 'they're really trying to close it [discussion] down' and Katie suggested that liberalism occurs 'because they're struggling, not because they're clever'. Displays of liberalism were said to be used to avoid addressing the issues. Katie described a situation where a female trainee was 'getting off on being a gay man's friend rather than doing any work, so if he'd said y'know "the world is made of green cheese" or something she'd have said "oh yes and it's really gay green cheese"'. For Daniel, 'it's like the people who say, "oh I don't see people as Black so that isn't an issue for me". When people say that, I'm immediately suspicious and think "yes it is, and you've got a big problem here"'. Lou said she aimed to challenge the 'sameness argument', imbuing a sense of danger to liberalism within the training context: 'challenge this whole fuckwittery about I treat everybody the same [...] it's really dangerous'. Trainers challenged and managed this problem by strategies such as 'throwing in some statistics about homophobic attacks' (Simon: I04). Overall, trainers wanted trainees to 'go away [from training...] thinking there *is* an issue here [...] it's not good enough to treat lesbians and gay men as the same as everyone else and assume that heterosexist model' (Emma: I12).

e) **Religious Arguments Against Lesbians and Gay Men**

I just find it really really difficult when people say, y'know "I have nothing against an individual gay or lesbian person, but the Bible says, or y'know Islam says" and I think that doesn't relate to disability awareness, race, or gender awareness in the same way [...] it's an emotional thing that people say "well that's my belief system, and I'm committed to God" (Emily: I07)

Trainers remarked upon the difficulty in training of religious arguments against lesbians and gay men. Christianity, some of the trainers commented, had 'reared its ugly head in training sessions' (Ben: I01). The trainers felt that 'where there are fundamentalist christians there are usually negative attitudes to homosexuality' (Anthony: I14), and they were clear that religion 'masks a huge amount of homophobia' (Emily: I07), and stated that anti-lesbian/gay views tend to be 'clustered around religious belief' (Katie: I09). Often, trainers reported that they found religious objections to lesbians and gay men the

‘hardest’ (Emily: I07) anti-lesbian/gay argument raised in training; ‘it is a really tough one’ (Anthony: I14), which they found ‘really difficult to challenge’ (Emily: I07). Trainers discussed having a ‘dread of going into groups and finding that that’s there’ (Anthony: I14), because as Emily pointed out (above) religious condemnation of lesbians and gay men is contradictory. Often, within strong religious belief systems, not ‘judging’ individual lesbians and gay men sits uncomfortably with an overarching framework within which homosexuality is an inferior sexuality. Within LGAT11, for instance, Gladys quoted sections of the Bible from Exodus and linked homosexuality and incest, whilst simultaneously propounding the view that she does not judge people and every person is entitled to their own feelings. As these two positions are incommensurate but presented as in conjunction trainers found religion a difficult issue within training.

Within the essentialist lesbian and gay psychological literature, correlational studies suggest that religious (or conservative) beliefs and values are closely related to level of homophobia (as measured via homophobia scales, e.g., Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; see also Chapter 1). High religiosity and subsequent high levels of homophobia, it has been suggested, ‘express the feeling that cherished values are being violated and that illegitimate demands are being made for changes in the status quo’ (Herek, 1984:12). Herek (1984), in fact, uses the example of a devout fundamentalist christian as an illustration his ‘functional’ attitudinal model - of how one important identity to the individual, then influences their attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. Herek (1984: 13) proposes for negative attitudes based on religious ideology people ‘might be exposed to new interpretations of biblical references to homosexuality’. This strategy was also used by (some) trainers who reported emphasising to trainees that ‘there are very very few references, even if they are references to homosexuality in the bible’ (Ben: I01), and ‘there are as many interpretations of the bible as there are people’ (Zac: I15). However, they did not necessarily find this a productive method of challenging: ‘I can sit and quote absurd sections of the bible to people from now until the cows comes home [...] I mentioned the thing about shellfish earlier, you don't see christian fundamentalists fire bombing Tescos [supermarket] cos they sell crab paste y'know, we tend to forget the bits that we don't want’ (Ben: I01). As Ben highlights, religious objections to homosexuality

are (partly) based on selective interpretation of the bible, and thus contradicting or questioning that interpretation is not inevitably effective because trainers viewed christian trainees as being heavily invested in their belief.

Further approaches to the problem of religion within training consisted of attempting to ‘build bridges’ between identities, for instance Anthony (I: 14) discussed saying to (Black christian) trainees:

“You have a culture and a cultural heritage and a cultural history that’s really rich and it’s been really persecuted and we have one too” erm “and let me tell you about some of the examples of how our cultural history has been irradiated or changed or challenged or persecuted” and that “we are two peoples y’know on this planet and clearly you have your religious beliefs and they’re very important to you, but gay people also y’know it’s not helpful persecuting them or judging them”

Drawing parallels is a strategy used in many contexts with in LGAT, and although as Emily (I07) suggested religious-based homophobia ‘doesn’t relate to disability awareness, race, or gender awareness in the same way’ emphasizing similarities between social groups may be efficacious. Another form of parallelism is for trainers to point out that religious affiliation and lesbian and gay identities are not necessarily incompatible. If trainers mention lesbian and gay religious groups (e.g., Metropolitan Community Church) they can enable trainees to acknowledge that religion and homosexuality are not mutually exclusive or incompatible. One approach trainers discussed using to address trainees’ implying that trainers are ‘demonizing christians’ (Zac: I15) is to differentiate between individual christians and organized religion, such as evangelical movements or the Christian Institute. This may take the form of partial agreement, ‘so I say “I agree with you in the sense that’s it’s unfair[ly] negative, challenging individual christians, but what about challenging the large scale”’ (Zac: I15). For instance, there is a plethora of anti-lesbian and –gay material on the internet that could be used by trainers to emphasize the significance of right-wing fundamentalist christian groups. One such organization is STRAIGHT (Society To Remove All Immoral Godless Homosexual Trash, http://www.melvig.org/mel/str_2.html) based in Denver Colorado, which (amongst other things) aims to ‘rescue our [sic] language from redefinition by the

"gayspeak" movement of the Heterophobes' and 'counter the SADs (Sodomites Against Decency) assault' and encourage heterosexuals to 'stand up against perversion!'. Their incitement to hatred of lesbians and gay men includes referring to the lives of 'queers' as a 'DEATHSTYLE!' and quoting passages of the bible as 'evidence' of the efficacy of their perspective:

'Homosexuals have the lowest life-expectancy of any other group. AIDS is still predominantly spread and contracted by Homosexuals, mainly because of their highly promiscuous behavior. If it wasn't for their "blood terrorism" and bi-sexual relations the innocent straight populace would still be relatively unaffected by this killer disease. "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace" Rom. 8:6' (http://www.melvig.org/mel/str_2.html)

By highlighting the extremity and voracity of publicly available anti-lesbian and –gay views, trainers may be able to appeal to individual Christians' sense of 'justice' and cause movement towards a more liberal expression of views towards lesbians and gay men, because participants may be disinclined to align with obvious extremism. A strategy which circumvents directly challenging religious participants about their beliefs is to stress the distinction between personal views and professional role; providing the message that 'your opinions are up to you, what I'm talking about is how you do your job as a professional' (Ben: I01). Although trainers were unsure whether this approach was successful, they felt it at least provided 'a platform to work from' (Ben: I01). The message of professionalism and equity for service users or clients could be conveyed by trainers emphasising that, 'your treatment of everybody must be fair, because that's professional' (Ben: I01) or trainees have 'got to deliver the right kind of service' (Anthony: I14). However, the corollary if trainees were unable or unwilling to provide appropriate services of lesbian and gay clients would be to recognise the need to 'refer them on because you have a problem with their sexuality, not because they are wrong, but because you've got a problem with it' (Anthony: I14).

f) 'Race' and Ethnicity

Trainers' discussed drawing parallels between the societal situation for lesbians and gay men and other minority groups. With regard to racism (and sexism and [dis]ablism) there

is (some) commonality with heterosexism, and parallels to racial oppression are drawn upon within LGAT, and within the affirmative lesbian and gay education literature (e.g., McKee et al., 1994). This strategy is neither new nor unique to the training context. The association between race and sexuality as ‘ethnic’ categories has been commonly used within progay movements (Smith & Windes, 2000: 20). For instance during the early years of the Gay Liberation Movement the analogy of ‘The Faggot as Nigger’ was made (Altman, 1999: 28). Katie (I09) felt that ‘it’s [not] possible to become completely non-oppressive towards gay men and lesbians, and still be oppressive toward every Black person you meet, you have to start thinking about the process’. Although particular arguments may be useful at specific times there is nothing inherently pro-lesbian or pro-gay in such arguments. It is their value when used interactionally which is important and suggesting ‘off the cuff’ responses to specific anti-LGB arguments would not (probably) be useful in practice. For example with regard to the argument stressing similarity between heterosexism and racism Bohan and Russell (1999: 210) have suggested that ‘white LGBs’ comparisons between racism and homonegativity typically emphasise similarities and underplay differences between the two prejudices. Dialogue between groups is not likely to occur when only our commonalities are understood’.

Nevertheless, trainers ‘hope’ that other minority groups share a sense of oppression and to some extent empathise with the struggles of lesbians and gay men. However this group of trainers (who were all white), when training ethnically diverse groups reported that drawing links between heterosexism and racism was not always acceptable to trainees; there was the potential to be ‘accused of being patronising’ (Sam: I02) by Black (or Asian) trainees. Non-white participants, they felt, may be ‘particularly challenged’ (Zac: I15) by LGAT when Black people are represented as lesbian and gay (for example, in posters), conveyed in sentiments such as: “why are all these Black people here? Are they kind of homoeroticising Black people” (Zac: I15).

When trainers draw parallels between racial and lesbian and gay oppression many aspects of cultures are not comparable. One such division is the ‘visibility’ of Black and Asian persons versus the comparative invisibility of lesbians and gay men and the related issue

of coming out to family and friends. Consider the ‘joke’ Ben re-counts telling group participants:

“I don't know whether this joke is homophobic I don't know whether it's racist or both, but which is harder in Britain today, is it harder to be Black or it is harder to be gay? Well I don't know but at least if you're Black you don't have to tell your parents” and I tell them this joke and I then make the point that look “if you're Black in Britain you'll never get to hear how white people talk when there are no Black people there, you will never hear it” [...] I say “when you're gay you get to hear it all the time because you are always assumed not to be there” (Ben: I01)

Although group members may find ‘that idea frightening’ (Ben: I01), the group may not respond positively to these contrasts, and trainers may find their reactions ‘very difficult to deal with’ (Sam: I02). There is potential whilst making comparisons to other oppressed groups that discussion can deteriorate into internal wrangling about which minority group is ‘most’ oppressed and ‘worthy’, epitomised in trainee statements ventriloquised by trainers such as “there’s much more issues about mentally handicapped people that there are about this” or “I do think those poor disabled people are much much more worthy than you” (Dee: I06). Trainers felt ‘it should never be assumed’ (Sam: I02) that trainees from other oppressed groups automatically ‘recognise the validity of other disadvantaged groups within their own minority group’ (Sam: I02), for instance, in the case of a Black gay man living with HIV. When drawing analogies trainers may fail to communicate that ‘prejudice exists in all different groups’ (Niki in Simon: I04b), which can result in misunderstandings: ‘a Black woman said “well [...] the lesbian and gay community being racist, isn’t this a big problem?” [...] she was very hung up on the idea that the lesbian and gay community is racist, and didn’t get beyond that’ (Niki in Simon: I04b). Thus, trainers need to circumvent the problem of drawing parallels becoming ‘a Black and white issue’ (Simon: I04b), rather than enabling participants to recognise prejudices within various minority groups (including their own). The implications of a Black participant saying ‘the Black community are really really homophobic’ (Lauren speaking in LGAT 7) are different to similar views being voiced by a white trainer. White trainers may not be ‘trusted’ (Zac: I15) by Black or Asian participants. Simon felt it was important to communicate to trainees that ‘prejudice’ exists in all communities:

‘There’s a number of people within the Black and Asian community who are homophobic [...] and that because we’re standing there [...] not to assume that white predominantly white, working to middle class gays and lesbians aren’t racist [...] we’ve got work to do, but I’m willing to hold my hand up and say that, rather than just go “well you’re the bad people and we just love you, come into our community” because it’s false you know I don’t want it to seem like you know we’re perfect and everything’s being done to us, we’re also doing shit to other people’ (Simon: I04b)

In addition, trainers found ‘the Black white thing in the context of sexuality’ (Katie: I09) difficult when it created a ‘dynamic’ between participants which ‘is not always healthy’ (Katie: I09). Trainers found the issue of race problematic when: ‘white people start saying “well Black people are really homophobic aren’t they, you poor Black people you must come from a homophobic culture” and y’know therefore we can lump it all on you and you get Black people who are struggling with [that] saying “well yeah it’s quite a religious background I’ve had and I’ve had to work at it”’(Katie: I09). One way of managing this difficulty in training would be to ‘split Black students off, and give them space’ (Katie: I09), which should be coupled with challenging white participants who shift the blame for homophobia onto (solely) Black communities. Moreover, strategies to alleviate the problem of participants rejecting analogies between race and sexuality could include ‘turn[ing] it back’ (Sam: I02) to the group, and ask ‘how do you feel I could present it better?’ (Sam: I02). If asked in a non-threatening way this approach could bring Black trainees “on-side” and encourage collaboration.

g) Disgust at Gay Male Sex

[The anus is] ‘the ultimate symbol of all that is unclean and revolting’ (Morin, 1998, quoted in Wood, 2000: 30)

Trainers found dealing with (some) participants’ expressing a prurient interest in gay male sex difficult within LGAT. In some sessions trainers reported that trainees’ held the view that issues pertaining to gay men were, “nothing to do with lifestyle and relationships and that sort of thing, it’s purely about physical sex and it’s purely about anal sex” (Emily: I07). Trainers suggested participants can be ‘out to shock’ other group members by talking about cottaging and anal sex; they may also be ‘really graphic’ and make ‘wild generalizations’ (Emily: I07) about gay men. Trainers felt that there were

three aspects to trainees' disgust about gay male sex. One was the 'huge link' participants 'have in their heads which is between gayness and paedophilia' (Emily: I07). The second element was trainees' 'worry' about anal sex, 'and how awful it must be and "isn't it dangerous and doesn't it hurt" and all of that' (Anthony: I14). The third related to gay men's involvement in 'meaningless sex, and promiscuity' (Ben: I01).

The trainers suggested two approaches to dealing with notions that gay men are more promiscuous than heterosexuals. The first is a liberal position which emphasises similarities between sexualities and individualises the issue: 'you say "well some gay men are promiscuous, and some gay men aren't promiscuous, some straight men are some straight men aren't"' (Daniel: I05). The second approach is to acknowledge that gay men 'have more sex' and present a more challenging stance which maintains "there can be a difference, but what's wrong with promiscuity" [...] it's cultural I think it's about male sexuality and that if you put male sexuality y'know into a homosexual context then yeah you get lots of shagging' (Ben: I01; see also Chapter 2). When dealing with trainees' implying gay sex is depraved one trainer reported saying "'you're talking about me", and [...] it did shut them up' (Emily: I07). However, an approach that personalises such comments may not be successful because 'you've lost it really', and as that response is emotional the trainer is 'not winning an intellectual exercise' (Emily: I07).

In terms of cottaging, trainers were clear that 'you need to be able to convey it in a non pathological way' (Anthony: I14). An approach to dealing with trainees' comments such as "I don't understand cottaging, I think it's really sad and awful" (Ben: I01) is described below:

I've turned the question round and again straight men sort of said, "right okay you're a straight man and you want to have sex what do you do? You go out to a bar may be, you look for a contact ad, you might go to a prostitute" erm I think straight men would love to be able to have sex as easily as gay men y'know without talking, or spending money, to just go and have sex. I think if they're honest if women were out cruising straight men would love it yeah erm and if I put it that way then people go "yeah" or straight men do "oh yeah that sounds alright", that one doesn't tend to work so much with women' (Ben: I01)

Thus, making links between gay men and heterosexual men's 'desires' may render cottaging less repugnant and more understandable for trainees. Others would suggest that trainees read a 'good account in a novel around cottaging' (Anthony: I14).

h) Stereotypes and Diversity

Trainers talked about being 'ambassadors', 'models' or 'walking visual aids', and discussed having given serious consideration to the extent to which they could (or wanted to) represent to trainees 'the acceptable face of homosexuality' (Ron: I03). Trainers may need to 'take the lead in dispelling myths or stereotypes' (Newman, 1989: 207) however, and the consideration trainers had given to the manner they represented themselves (and by extension lesbians and gay men) is testament to the common assumption that 'the most powerful educational approach...may be positive interpersonal contact with lesbians and gay men' (Cramer, 1997: 295; Grack & Richman, 1996).

All the trainers felt that they were, to some extent, seen by trainees as representative of lesbians and gay men at large. Training with another person was often viewed by trainers as an important aspect of successful training, because if there was variation in the ascribed characteristics of the trainers this could circumvent or reduce the problem of trainees perceiving them as *the* spokespeople for all lesbians or all gay men. As Katie remarked, it is 'important to have a man and a woman, and it's quite important to have a Black and white dimension as well'. They discussed the importance of co-training with someone from a different 'group' and there being 'sufficient difference' (Anthony: I14) between them because, as Sam acknowledged: 'I can't as a gay man profess to speak on behalf of a lesbian or a woman, on both those issues'. Although, the majority of the interviewees did not wholeheartedly support the idea that heterosexuals make good co-trainers, in fact some said 'they'd fuck it up' (Sam: I02), others found working alongside heterosexuals useful because they had found that they 'will come down much heavier on the hets than I will' (Lou: I11).

However, this training goal presented a dilemma for trainers who talked of the irony and mismatch between their appearance and the reality of what they were aiming to achieve

in training. For instance, Ron (I03) ‘found’ himself ‘wearing a checked shirt and jeans and [...] the people in the group actually drew me [...] I’m sat there going “no no, that’s an awful stereotype” and I’m sat there being it’. Lou saw the contradiction as well: ‘what I want to do is blow some of the stereotypes and I do have a small giggle at myself because I probably [represent quite a lot of them]. I have short hair, I wear trousers I’m in a man’s jacket I’m wearing a waistcoat, I have sensible shoes’. In the interviews there were three main ways trainers negotiated the issue of appearance and stereotypes which I have categorised as, (i) ‘being ordinary’, (ii) ‘problematising sameness’, and (iii) ‘challenging stereotypes’. The extracts I draw on show trainers talking about using their appearance as a resource for persuasive effect, and stereotypes are (often implicitly) viewed as ‘common-sense’ rhetorical constructions which can be manipulated to attain a particular symbolic currency; namely to challenge heterosexist views of lesbian and gay identity.

(i) ‘Being Ordinary’: a sameness argument

Some trainers felt they minimised the difference between lesbians or gay men and heterosexuals, and thus undermined stereotypes, by appearing ‘ordinary’ and fostering the view that, ‘he’s just an ordinary guy who does all the things everybody else does’, unlike ‘Quentin Crisp or Julian Clary’ (Saul: I10). For instance, Ben said that he attempted to communicate the idea that, ‘lesbians and gay men aren’t beamed down from planet homosexual. We come from the same backgrounds; we come from the same ideological positions [as heterosexuals]’. The position of ‘being ordinary’ is exemplified (below) in Daniel’s account of his appearance:

‘I always go in my school teacher outfit [...] because there is, even amongst intelligent people, stereotypes of gay men [...] I do that to show that really I’m just ever so boring and ordinary [...] and wouldn’t be too concerned with gay fashion or anything like that.’
(Daniel: I05)

In this extract Daniel contrasts his ‘school teacher outfit’ with a lack of interest in ‘gay fashion’, which implicitly encodes being ‘professional’ and ‘smart’ with *not* being gay. The phrase ‘ever so boring and ordinary’ suggests the putative stereotypes that group members hold regarding gay men are antithetical to professionalism. He implies that a

gay identity is neither boring nor ordinary, and by extension is perhaps flamboyant, camp, or even abnormal. Daniel's emphasis on embodying a 'professional' (i.e., a school teacher) identity, rather than a 'gay' identity is an assimilationist move which stresses the 'normality' of gayness, and thus its similarity to heterosexuality. Clarke (2002c) has suggested that (in relation to lesbian and gay parenting) such 'normalisation' strategies are commonly used in the public domain as they readily engage with heterosexual ideology and pose no threat to the status quo. Within the context of training emphasising ordinariness was (perhaps) the least radical approach espoused by the interviewees.

(ii) *'Problematising Sameness'*

A 'sameness' argument, which disavowed lesbian or gay identity, was not common within the trainers' talk. More prevalent were ideas which centred around explicitly lesbian or gay appearance, which worked to problematise a position of (merely) similarity to heterosexuals. In the extract below Ron describes potential difficulties presenting an image of lesbians and gay men as 'normal' and like heterosexuals.

'I feel really awful now, because now I feel like I'm saying what we should present is [...] I feel like one of these people¹ [...] in the 50s or 60s. But they were very much like "we must dress conservatively, and behave demurely, and you know, sort of like show that we're just normal people, and that we're nice, and we can just live quite little lives and not disturb anyone"[...] I don't believe in that, but I kind of do it myself, which seems a bit odd.' (Ron: I03)

In this extract, Ron points out the 'oddness' in presenting an argument based purely on similarity to group members. He talks about 'not believing in that' yet, to some extent, stressing sameness to heterosexuals in training. Ron is perhaps referring to the (broadly) liberal context in which anti-homophobia training takes place, which may negate, or make problematic the voicing of arguments based on difference, and exclude more radical challenges to normative heterosexuality². A different, but related instance of

¹ Ron is referring to members of the conservative American organisation the Mattachine Society, which lobbied for equal rights to heterosexuals based on lesbians' and gay men's similarity to heterosexuals. (see also Chapter 10).

² Interviewees commented that their agenda was (sometimes) co-opted by participants so that training had an individualised, rather than an overtly political focus. For instance Emma reflected on not finding the opportunity to bring lesbian feminist arguments into a training session: 'thinking about it now, there was a bit of lack of politics really'.

‘problematising sameness’ was present by Anthony (I14): ‘I wouldn’t go for sort of stereotypical gay clothes, but wouldn’t completely power dress either, but I think I probably would be smart and fairly normal, because I think I come out with some quite unusual things.’ The ‘similarity to heterosexuals’ argument, here, is undermined in a different way. Anthony provides some justification for dressing in a ‘smart and fairly normal’ way for training because he ‘comes out with some quite unusual things’. He offsets his ‘normal’ – and by extension heterosexual - appearance by contrasting it with what he says in training, and so renders problematic a stance premised on purely similarity to heterosexuals.

Within both ‘being ordinary’ and ‘problematising sameness’ trainers oriented to stereotypes and their effect. For instance, another trainer Emma said she looked ‘dykey’ and thought ‘I’m really obvious now, I wonder what difference that’ll make?’ The pressure to conform to or to challenge stereotypes was a dilemma for the trainers, whether they represented them visually and refuted them verbally or vice versa, partly caused by the amalgamation of professional and personal identities within this type of training. As educators their personal identity is (perhaps) not relevant in the public sphere, and making it so could be deemed ‘unprofessional’; however, as non-heterosexuals their personal sexual identity is relevant. For instance in LGAT 5 with social work students Daniel commented, ‘Now I shouldn’t really talk about personal circumstances, but I will do here, because I’ve just been brought up against this in the past couple of days...’.

(iii) *‘Challenging “stereotypes”’*

The last theme presents some challenge to the notion, foregrounded in the first two themes, that trainers’ appearances orient to a heterosexist stereotype of lesbians and gay men, that they can either emulate or problematise. I now consider how they talked about avoiding them. In challenging stereotypes, these trainers did not refute the salience of cultural stereotypes of lesbians and gay men, but drew on discourses that bypassed their

similarity to, or degrees of difference from heterosexuals. Saul provided an example of this:

‘I present me. I don’t think there’s any point in being dishonest because I think again part of the control issue around heterosexism is that we are made to be dishonest, we’re told that we can hide, I could choose to grow my hair longer and shave my goatee off and you know wear the sort of clothes that my daughter would like me to wear occasionally and become her Dad again. And I don’t wanna be dishonest. If I’m dishonest then they’ve [heterosexuals] won.’ (Saul: I11)

In this extract Saul gives an individualised account of ‘presenting me’ and for him, being himself is synonymous with looking like a gay man (e.g., having a goatee beard, and short hair, and not conforming to the notion of what a ‘dad’ looks like). He constructs manipulating stereotypes in a way that denies gay identity as being ‘dishonest’. For Saul looking gay and being gay are inextricably linked, which has been described as a ‘*being* a member’ rather than ‘merely *doing* membership’ (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995: 156, original emphasis). Constructing an account of gay identity which personally applies to Saul, to which he is more than superficially committed (i.e. remaining faithful to the identity despite his own daughter’s view) enhances his authenticity within this social category, which enables the challenge to the stereotypes argument. The challenge is embedded in the linking of denying the self, and thus being ‘dishonest’, with the operation of heterosexism which makes people ‘hide’. If heterosexism is the ‘belief that the only right, natural, normal, God-given...way of relating to each other is heterosexually’ (Gray et al., 1996: 205) explicitly connecting passing as heterosexual with heterosexist ideology challenges the ‘similarity to heterosexuals’ argument, by rendering it transparent and acknowledging the prejudice embedded within it. An alternative way that the ‘stereotypes argument’ can be undermined is illustrated in the following excerpt.

‘Oh well I just dress scruffily because I always dress scruffily, but part of that is I’m aware of how effectively that can work in my favour, because people see me and go “who is this scruffy idiot”. And then, when I’m turning on the power and the articulate, and the very expressive, “oh yeah this boy can express himself” [...] If I went in power dressed they’d be expecting powerful. If I go in and look a bit ditsy and a bit scruffy then they suddenly get bang! I think I can be very persuasive, and people don’t expect that, not to look at me.’ (Ben: I01)

Here Ben circumvents the issue of sameness, with use of the contrast ‘scruffy’ and ‘smart’. By constructing a link between a ‘scruffy’ appearance and being idiotic, and juxtaposing this with ‘smart’ equalling intelligent, articulate and persuasive, he side steps the issue of topicalising sexual identity and appearance. I highlighted earlier that professionalism was implicitly constructed as ‘not gay’. Daniel talked about wearing a ‘school teacher outfit’ as not part of a ‘gay’ appearance, and Anthony put ‘powerdressing’ and ‘stereotypical gay clothes’ on different ends of a spectrum. By creating a different contrast category (scruffy versus smart) Ben avoids the issue of gayness or gay identity being seen only in reference to similarity or difference from heterosexuality.

The trainers reported adopting different strategies to manage the issues of appearance and stereotypes, and I would argue there are no inherent qualities in arguments from sameness or arguments from difference which make them ‘successful’ (Humphrey, 1999b: 230). Trainers’ consideration of the issue of appearance in these ways indicates their pedagogic sensitivity and competence.

i) Unpredictability of sessions and trainer experience

When trainers were asked how their first (or early) experiences of conducting training felt, overwhelmingly, the trainers talked about negative personal feelings when initially facilitating training. Ben said ‘it was quite frightening really’, Sam recalled ‘it’s not such a frightening experience as it used to be’, and Daniel initially ‘found it terrifying’. Lou, Emily and Katie all found training a scary experience: ‘it was absolutely horrendous [...] I was scared [...] really, really scared’ (Emily: I07), ‘I used to be scared and I used to get, I suppose, slightly hurt from time to time’ (Katie: I09). Simon, at first, ‘felt really nervous’ and ‘was very self-conscious’, whilst Emily found ‘it [LGAT] does make you more vulnerable’ and ‘in the beginning’ Katie (I: 09) ‘was more angry but more apologetic’. Other negative words (or phrases) the trainers used when describing their early personal reactions to training were: ‘demanding’, ‘stretching’, ‘lonely’ (Lou: I11),

‘anxious’, ‘uncomfortable’ (Emma: I12), a ‘degree [...] of sort of threat about it’ (Andy: I13) and ‘incredibly hard work’ (Zac: 15).

In addition to inexperience when conducting training, difficulties can arise when trainers do not ‘predict how it would go down’ (Emma: I12). This occurs particularly when new exercises are being used for the first time. If trainers have ‘never done it before’ they can be taken ‘by surprise’ by the response(s) of the group and consequently can be ‘panicked’ (Emma: I12). Emma reflected upon a situation where she was unprepared for the group’s reaction after a ‘guided visualisation’ which described being heterosexual in a normatively lesbian and gay society:

‘I think a part of me was thinking “how can this affect people so much, it’s all so obvious” [...] I thought it was more a kind of “oh let’s look at this in a kind of fairly light-hearted way” but it actually seemed to effect people more deeply than I thought it would do and I was just a bit shocked and kind of didn’t really think very quickly on my feet in a way I would have wanted to’ (Emma: I12)

To evade potential problems when initially running particular exercises trainers should think through the possible reactions from participants and prepare how they will process exercises. For instance, a (relatively) common problem is when trainees cannot (or will not) generate derogatory terms for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. In this event, having a ‘crib-sheet’ of words and phrases (ideally compiled from the responses of other groups) can enable trainers to discuss the exercise without difficulty. Furthermore, having a response prepared when trainees do not say the ‘right’ or expected thing after an exercise is useful because: ‘we’ll always have one or two saying “no big deal didn’t bother me [feeling oppressed as a heterosexual after an exercise which creates a picture of a LGB world]”, y’know and then one has to say “that’s fascinating, how do you do not bothering. That’s really interesting, that’s really useful that it didn’t bother you, how did you do that cos that really is skilful”’ (Lou: I11). Therefore, although related to preparation (see theme A above), unforeseen responses are not necessarily related to trainer’s level of experience. Unusual participant reactions can cause trainers to either vacillate, or bring training to a standstill if trainers do not think about the possibility of (and their responses to) such difficulties.

j) **Insufficient Knowledge and related anxieties**

It is important that trainers 'feel confident with the material' (Ron: I03) they are presenting to participants. If trainers are 'not fully aware of all the kind of theory and the facts' (Ron: I03), or do not 'even understand' (Simon: I04) the material they are using then training can become difficult because they are 'really hoping that nobody ask[s] any awkward questions' (Ron: I03). When a particular exercise is 'too academic' or 'very theoretical' (Simon: I04, for example material about 'internalised homophobia') then trainers can feel 'a bit shaky' and not 'confident enough', which results in them coming 'across as a bit muddled' (Ron: I03) and not talking to the group with any 'authority' (Ron: I03). Not knowing enough about the process of facilitating an exercise or an area of lesbian and gay experience can therefore undermine trainers sense of professionalism. When exercises are not 'understood very well' confusion and subsequently objections can arise from participants, which can be 'really really tense' (Simon: I04) for trainers. Simon described an incident in training where a participant said: 'that all we were doing was accusing them all of being homophobic, rather than trying to get them to understand the process of homophobia, but the worst thing was he wouldn't let it go I mean I'm talking about not during that exercise but for the whole fucking day, for the follow up day, to the supervisor, on the evaluation [...] it was very aggressive it wasn't like "erm could you explain this"' (Simon: I04). Thus clarity (and clear understanding of materials) is need on the part of the trainer to (perhaps) prevent misunderstandings with trainees.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have contributed to the affirmative lesbian and gay literature concerning education by providing an analysis of sixteen trainers' experiences of the pitfalls (and how they can manage them) in training.

The pitfalls I have explored were: a) administration and preparation; b) 'passive resistance' from trainees; c) problematic aspects of 'the personal'; d) liberalism; e) religious arguments; f) 'race' and ethnicity; g) disgust at gay male sex; h) stereotypes and diversity; i) unpredictability of sessions and trainer experience; and lastly j) insufficient knowledge and other anxieties. This analysis has been tailored toward speaking to others who conduct training, with the hope that the insights from these trainers will improve how training is run. This chapter has highlighted that trainers have developed sophisticated strategies for attempting to ameliorate pitfalls such as altering the structure of training, modifying their own appearance, presenting 'facts' and alternative arguments to trainees' portrayals of LGBs. In the next chapter I examine trainees' interview talk about training.

Chapter 6

‘No one can legislate changes in our hearts and souls’¹: Trainees “evaluate” training

This chapter is concerned with trainee evaluations of training. My analysis is based on data in which trainees talked about both what they felt ‘worked’ and did not ‘work’ in the training they had experienced, and their attitudes and behaviour towards lesbians and gay men, and how they had or had not changed following training. There have been no previous evaluations of training on lesbian and gay issues – as far as I am aware- based upon interviews with attendees after the session. Nevertheless, interviews are a commonly discussed method of evaluating training sessions, and there is a general consensus that interviews with participants can be carried out at an stage of an evaluation process (J. Edwards, 1991; Patton, 1990; Robson, 2000; Shaw, 1999). As Rossi et al. (1999: 165) describe it, interviews are useful because ‘as the recipients of a program’s attempts to bring about change, their stories are also frequently illuminating for purposes of articulating the program’s impact theory’. These authors suggest that interviews with participants should include ‘participant satisfaction with the program’ and ‘participant progress toward attaining program goals’ (p. 359). Both of these issues were addressed in my interview schedule provided in Chapter 2.

This chapter applies this commonly discussed form of evaluation to the topic of lesbian and gay awareness training. Interviews were carried out with 16 trainees. One attended LGAT 2, one attended LGAT 7, five attended LGAT 6, four attended LGAT 9, and five attended a University equal opportunities forum session which did not form part of the core data set (see Chapter 2). In my analysis of the interview data I have attempted to balance the analytic focus between the content *and* the construction of trainees’ talk using thematic analysis coupled with insights from discourse analysis. Discourse analysis (regardless of the particular approach adopted) provides a constructionist epistemology that sees language constructing, rather than reflecting ‘reality’ (Coyle, 2000b). I have

¹ Taken from Fishbein (1996: 268).

‘strategically borrowed’ (DeVault, 1990) some of the insights from discourse analysis to enhance my analysis. In this analysis I embrace weak discursive claims exemplified by the work of Potter and Wetherell (1987), and employed in studies conducted by Plumridge et al., (1997), and Weaver and Ussher (1997).

The discursive approach to attitudes represents a radical departure from mainstream psychology regarding attitudes and prejudice (Duckitt, 1992; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In mainstream psychology an attitude is conceptualised as an interrelated set of propositions about an object (or group of objects) which are manifest through an individual’s cognitions, behaviours and emotions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Bethlehem, 1985; Bettinghaus, 1980; Bettelheim & Janowitz, 1964). According to conventional social psychological work on prejudice: ‘Prejudiced attitudes, by their nature, are relatively unresponsive to new and contradictory information’ (Fishbein, 1996: 268). When applied to anti-lesbian/gay attitudes traditional researchers argue that a desire to appear unprejudiced ‘is rarely evident in expressed attitudes toward homosexuals’ (Kite, 1994: 36). (We will see that this is not the case.) From a discursive perspective a version of the “attitude object” (e.g., lesbians and gay men) is constructed *within* accounts, and any discourse has an ‘action orientation’ in that it is constructed to achieve particular tasks rather than to ‘accurately’ represent internal cognitive states (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 48; Potter, 1998). Talk *about* attitudes and behaviour, is therefore, not superfluous, ostensible “noise” which can be stripped away to reveal the underlying ‘real’ internal intentions, but rather is thoroughly complicit in the production of a particular position. Previous discursive research has focused on ‘attitudes talk’ (e.g., Augoustinos et al., 1999; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Van Dijk, 1997), particularly the expression of attitudes which have been prefigured by the phrase ‘I’m not a racist but...’ (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000). My analysis extends this literature, and refocuses it onto talk *about* attitudes, and talk *about* behaviour change (or not). Thus, rather than problematising the conventional psychological notion of attitudes as fixed internal cognitive states, exemplified by Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) classic work, this chapter aims to document the accounting practices displayed in trainees’ talk about what they have gained from training (or not) which has impacted on their attitudes and behaviour towards lesbians

and gay men. I attempt to use this as a basis to make practical suggestions to improve training.

Discursive work often stops short of making suggestions for what should be done ‘in the real world’ (but see Frith & Kitzinger, 2001). Suggestions to alter and undermine heterosexist discourse are notably absent from previous studies (e.g., Praat & Tuffin, 1996; Speer & Potter, 2000). Praat and Tuffin (1996: 72) concluded that ‘through the examination of homosexual discourses in society perhaps the wider problems of prejudice against gay men and lesbians could be confronted in a meaningful way’. Speer and Potter (2000: 563) write ‘the discursive approach highlights heterosexism’s mundane, everyday manifestations. It is important the educators and trainers recognize this, and ultimately we may be in a better position from which to lay bare and disarm the mechanisms that construct and maintain such prejudice’. I do not disagree with their goals (quite the reverse) but neither addresses *how* heterosexism can be ‘confronted’ or ‘disarm[ed]’. As a trainer, I am left wanting more.

POST-TRAINING INTERVIEWS

The interviewees raised similar topics as trainees wrote on the evaluation forms, for instance the lack of time in training to ‘take it that little bit further’ (Bernie), and they voiced the concern that ‘there isn’t enough’ (Darren) training on LGB issues (see Chapter 3). As might be expected, there was overlap and commonality between both forms of trainee feedback². The interviewees gave accounts that showed more ambivalence towards the utility and merits of training. In terms of their general perspectives on training they were clear that ‘We’ve got to be educated and we’ve got to be trained’ (Donna), but this was tempered by talk which suggested that ‘I don’t think you should force people to go to training’ (Tom). The analysis that follows concentrates on

² The two forms of data differed on the topic of the trainer. Only one interviewee commented on the ‘repartee’ between the co-trainers, which he felt created a good style. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the interviews with trainees were an interesting data gathering experience, as often I had also been one of, or the sole trainer. This is likely to have influenced the way in which interviewees talked about the trainer. Presumably it is easier to state that you liked the individual conducting a training event on an anonymous evaluation sheet, whereas discussing that with the person concerned could be more difficult interactionally.

interviewee talk about the usefulness of training, barriers to implementing behavioural change at work, and talk about self-reflection, attitudes and attitude change (or not).

The themes in the post-training interview data are: practical applications of training; barriers to applying training (i.e., training was lacking relevance and the workplace prohibits change); and the trainees' talk about 'attitudes'. Within the trainees' talk about attitudes I focus on four sub-themes: 1) that training provided a space for reflection; 2) trainees' ideas changing as a result of training; 3) training was, in fact, preaching to the converted and; 4) trainees' admissions of (slight) homophobia. I conclude this chapter by discussing the implications of my analysis of trainees' responses to training both for trainers and for the training enterprise. Finally, I discuss the relationship between what trainees say they want, the politics of applying what they want, and the pros and cons of this for the content and ethos of LGAT.

Practical Applications of Training

Having a training experience which equipped trainees to directly apply the knowledge and skills they had learned was something that interviewees talked about valuing. As one interviewee stated: 'practical experience is the key to everything' (Matthew). Interviewees were less concerned with the 'theoretical' and 'the concepts around it' than 'think[ing] on the ground, "how can you actually work with this"' (Sharon). Rachel singled out 'thinking about where I work' as being the 'kind of learning' she most gained from the LGAT session she attended. (She works in a male youth club which is 'macho' and where epithets imputing homosexuality are used to censure 'non-masculine' behaviour.) Other interviewees talked about training 'encourag[ing] you to bring these issues to meetings and things [and] to say "we need to like, you know, put up a few more posters"' (Janine), and also altering practice with service users. For instance, Geraldine talked about applying training when drawing 'family trees' and when she asked questions to ascertain the nature of the relationships her therapeutic clients have. Although she had

‘always tried to ask questions in a neutral way “does that person have a partner, does this person have a partner”’ she reflected on the fact that before training she had not ‘pushed that any further’. Interviewees also talked about being in a stronger position after training to, if necessary, to refer individuals on to more appropriate parties, illustrated by Matthew’s comment: ‘perhaps if nothing else if a difficult situation occurred, we [...] could contact Ben or yourself’. There were, however, impediments to trainees articulating ways in which training could influence their working practice. I will now move on to address some of the barriers interviewees discussed to applying training to their work.

Barriers to Applying Training

Altering the behaviour of those attending training is one of the goals of training which trainers felt constituted successful training (see Chapter 5). Exercises, such as ‘how can I make my workplace more LGB friendly?’ form part of training *because* the focus is on behaviours and making practical changes (see Chapter 4). In these data there were no explicit cases where trainees claimed that they personally would make clear changes in their behaviour as a result of training, or that training had inspired them to champion lesbian and gay rights in the workplace, to ensure that ‘sexuality’ was written into equal opportunities policies, or to express a commitment to consistently and vigorously challenging heterosexist comments made in the work place. One trainee directly said that she thought training would have virtually no effect on behaviour, even though trainees were asked to write down three ‘action points’ which trainers hoped would facilitate trainees in operationalising manageable changes they could implement at work (see Buhrke & Douce, 1991 for advice to counseling psychologist about undermining heterosexism), and so would galvanize them into making a commitment towards positive action.

EP: How do you think it [training] might have influenced people’s actual working practice?

Geraldine: Really.

EP: Yeah (.) really ((laughs))

Geraldine: Probably not very much really.

- EP: Yeah mm those action points can you envisage people actually going back into work and implementing them?
- Geraldine: ((Pause)) No.
- EP: No?
- EP: No honestly I don't think so no.

By and large, rather than plainly suggesting that training would have no further ramifications for their practice, interviewees discussed the barriers which would impede their (and others) ability to make pro-lesbian/gay changes in their working practice and work settings. The two main barriers to training application interviewees discussed were: (1) training did not equip them with the knowledge or skills to effect change, in other words training was lacking relevance; and (2) the workplace (or other external factors) prohibit change. I now explore these in turn.

(1) Training was Lacking Relevance

'What I find with a lot of equal ops type stuff is it's erm, this isn't a criticism of your session but kind of equal ops generally, there is a lot of erm information or there's a lot of talk but it seems as though it's very difficult to get some action, to say "okay we're going to do this about it then, this is what we are going to do"' (Ian)

Ian's description of training highlights that it is inherently difficult to apply; action as a result of training, according to Ian, is intrinsically difficult. As I mentioned before, interviewees discussed abstract concepts being less useful for them than information which related directly to work practice. The general societal context for lesbians and gay men, or a theoretical framework for understanding anti-lesbian and -gay prejudice was less practicable for participants than concrete illustrations. Only one of the 16 interviewees felt that an overall understanding of homophobia 'might provide some sort of backdrop to any incident that might occur in the future' and that the manifestations of homophobia constituted a 'practical application' (Tom) of training. Actual work practice was very important for trainees, and being told how to 'approach a situation' (Bill) was something they talked a lot about.

Interviewees suggested that ‘case studies’ (Donna, Tom) and scenarios that were closely tied to their working practice would have ‘more impact’ (Tom), because as Bernie remarked, ‘it’s the real cases that matter’, and they discussed being able to ‘relate to them better’ (Tom). Interviewees wanted the realities of lesbian and gay lives and how they could *practically* tackle heterosexism in their workplaces made concrete through training. Tips, strategies and recommendations for their practice were what they wanted LGAT to provide them with, and they often discussed the shortfall between their hopes for gaining material they could use at work and what training had actually provided them with.

This was most strongly (but not exclusively) highlighted in the interviews with wardens, in that without exception, they spoke about the training not equipping them with the practical information they would have found most useful. The desire for training to be seen as useful was apparent in the significance trainees attached to being able to relate the *general* picture for lesbians and gay men to their own work environments. Ian would have liked training to be ‘more focused on the university’ so he could gain ‘more of an idea about “this is what’s happening, this is what we ought to be doing as a university”’. Bernie found training lacking because there was not enough time to ‘look at individual cases’ and discuss ‘some actual real things, bringing them out “how would you deal with this”’. Later in the interview he referred to having wanted the training to be ‘very specific’ and for it to have enabled the trainees to ‘get down to the nitty gritty’. Similarly, Darren reported that he would have found the experience more useful ‘if it was practically orientated in terms of, you know, actually helping us do stuff’. In general, the wardens group would have liked the training to be ‘more focused on hall matters’.

The importance, for trainees, of thoroughly *contextualised* LGAT sessions is reflected in this exchange with Lynn, a trainee in a short equal opportunities forum session. Again, her response to the interviewers (probing) question emphasizes that the knowledge the trainers – as lesbians and gay men - bring to training is viewed as important for trainees, and their own (limited) experience is insufficient to implement change.

- EP: Is there anything else that you would want to put into practice?
Lynn: I don't know it's really difficult when you kind of like, as I say I've had very little contac- overt contact with erm people who are homosexual bisexual. I think you never really know until there's something there for you to deal with.
- EP: Mm
Lynn: I mean I'd like to think I would (.) try to- (.) erm (.) and get people to think if they had overt anti why do they have that
- EP: Mm
Lynn: Erm but it is quite- I mean like you didn't get us doing any play acting, I always find that very difficult to do anyway [...] but erm y'know it it's quite difficult when you're out of context to try and think about how you would do things.

Here Lynn's justification for not being able to generate practical applications from training hinges upon her having had 'very little contac- overt contact' with LGB people. The claim of having 'limited experience' was common in interviewees talk. Lynn's account narrows her criteria for acting in a pro LGB way to contexts where 'there's something there for you to deal with', which (given her surrounding talk) would be a person that she knew to be a lesbian or a gay man, or a situation *specifically* lesbian or gay. Additionally, the argument that the training situation was not contextualised provides another reason for not being able to generate things she could 'put into practice'. Although, she stated a commitment to 'try[ing] to' 'get people to think' if they voiced overtly homophobic views, her response implied that after training she had not embraced a broader approach to undermining heterosexism at work.

There was also an expectation, from some trainees, that practically relevant anecdotes or experiences would be provided by group members who had more experience of a particular role (for instance experienced wardens, rather than post graduate sub-wardens). There was a hope that more experienced practitioners would be able to draw on their own knowledge of "we did this and this, we managed the situation by doing this and this", because if it happens to me at least I'll know how another person managed the situation' (Ann). However, it was apparent that asking the group to discuss their own experiences of handling instances of heterosexist discrimination, or LGB issues was insufficient: they claimed not to have enough first-hand material to drawn on, and they wanted more 'stories' from the trainers. The heterosexual trainees were aware of the inadequacy of

their experiences and perspectives: ‘you [the trainer] didn’t convey to us how we might help you [LGB people], so all we were doing was passing back any case studies that we had between us’ (Matthew). Matthew’s comment implies that the knowledge the group collectively had was insufficient for generating ideas about how to tackle anti-lesbian and –gay discrimination, and that groups flounder without the trainer(s) providing substantial amounts of information. Again, Tom commented that ‘it might have been nice if you and your colleagues [the trainers] could have used your experience to say “this is the kind of thing that might crop up in hall”’. He returned to this point later in the interview, suggesting that the trainers ‘could have really put yourself in our situation [...] and used your experience to our benefit’. Similarly Janine was ‘hoping’ for the ‘stories like, you know “when I first realized that I might be gay or lesbian I turned to an older uncle, or a youth worker, or a teacher and they helped me this way” and that would perhaps help you to know what would be the right thing to do’. Coming out was also specifically mentioned by Matthew, who had hoped that the trainers would have provided ‘more insight into how it was when you decided to come out [...] so I would perhaps be able to advise them [students] [...] how best to do that, if they are going to do it, or to advise them not to if it’s actually in your opinion a bad thing’. The trainees wanted to defer to the trainers’ greater knowledge of LGB issues, and they wanted the trainers to ‘put [them] in somebody else’s shoes’, and reported that it ‘was good’ (Geraldine) when they felt that had occurred.

In sum, the large amount of talk addressing the expectation, need and hope for practical information which was concrete and applicable to work place practice suggests this is an aspect of training which needs strengthening. Even those trainees, such as Sharon, who made reference to how they could apply the training at work wanted to ‘have more on the practical side’, ‘more scenarios’ and ‘more practical examples’.

(2) The Workplace Prohibits Change (and other external barriers)

There was only one instance in these data where an ‘internal’ reason was provided for not acting positively on behalf of lesbians and gay men. Consider Bill’s account:

I support minorities, erm but I don't crusade for them. And I suppose that's a way of looking at it. I support it, but I wouldn't go out and hold a placard, cos I wouldn't do it for anything that I was into. I wouldn't do it for something I was really into, never mind something I'm vaguely not interested at all about. As I said, it sounds callous, but where do you draw the line I mean it's like clubbing seals or whatever like you know what I mean. It's not the right thing to do but – I wouldn't do it – but it's not to say it isn't done, and people do it. But I'm not gonna walk around London with a plaque (Bill)

Interestingly Bill conceptualises challenging heterosexism as 'crusaid[ing]' and 'hold[ing] a placard'. He presents acting on behalf of lesbians and gay men as an extreme form of politicised campaigning activity. His personal preference for not engaging in positive action is therefore a rational almost sensible strategy, because he positions positive action in very narrow "extreme" terms. His comparison between heterosexism and clubbing seals highlights that they are both brutal and wrong, and he conveys the message that 'it's not the right thing to do'. He creates a wide gulf between his view about both (i.e., they are wrong), and his action, or rather lack of action. Given he would not crusade for vulnerable, defenseless seals, lesbians and gay men inevitably could expect no 'crusaiding' from him. If he had said that he was not prepared to challenge someone who had made a homophobic comment he would have presented himself in a negative light, however, constructing positive action as demonstrating on the street mitigates being blamed for his inactivity. In other words, if challenging heterosexism means effortful and extreme behaviour (i.e., traveling all the way to London from the Midlands and walking around with a plaque) which he would not do 'for something I was really into', it seems *reasonable* that he wouldn't champion the cause of lesbians and gay men. Thus, although Bill presents himself as a barrier to change, he presents positive action in such specific and narrow terms that it is acceptable not to engage in such behaviour.

External barriers to change, as I go on to discuss, were far more prevalent in these data. This discourse forms part of broader accounting practices and is not dissimilar to what Praat and Tuffin (1996: 68-70) label the discourse of 'society'. They found heterosexual police officers commonly placed the responsibility for denying gay men entry into the police force with 'the public' or society at large and *their* discriminatory views.

Occasionally the interviewees discussed how their workplaces were already tackling LGB issues, in that they ‘already [had] information, and posters and that sort of thing. If they [young people] want to talk to somebody they don’t know or something like that, we have that kind of information kind of freely available’ (Rachel). There was, however, only one account provided by an interviewee which presented the work environment as actively *promoting*, and conducive to, positive action. Darren suggested that ‘anything which we could say helped us to help gay and lesbian students would get the department brownie points’, but a far more prevalent account was that the workplace climate –in various ways- prohibited positive change.

One common work place barrier, was the observation that homophobia and lesbian and gay issues were not a ‘live issue’ (James) within halls of residence, in that, ‘incidents’ involving someone’s (homo)sexuality had not been brought to the attention of a warden. Some of the more experienced wardens in halls of residence described the situation thus: ‘I can’t say, in all the years I’ve been a warden, it’s [homophobia] ever been an issue’ (Tom). Therefore, the absence of ‘incidents’, or problems relating to sexuality was viewed by some interviewees as impeding their ability to make changes, as they relayed literally having nothing in their professional role to work with, in the sense of altering their practice, or approaching the situation in a different way. Conversely, for youth worker interviewees, the prevalence of homophobic comments at work was presented as an insurmountable difficulty in fostering change (see also the discussion of ‘gay’ being used as a generic term of abuse, Chapter 4). As Rachel described it: ‘it would be constant badgering of staff and people using the wrong word in the wrong context, and you know, you would be chasing people around all night’. Rachel presents the problem as so frequent and pervasive that challenging comments would be ‘constant’, and take ‘all night’, and she intimates how wearing this would be for her (and others) through use of the words ‘badgering’ and ‘chasing’ – which imply she would been seen as pestering and hounding people with little hope of change. Addressing sexuality at work was presented as difficult for both lesbian and gay colleagues and heterosexuals by Geraldine, again, because of how raising LGB issues would be viewed by others at work. For gay people she suggested a barrier could be that opposition would regard that individual as being ‘too proactive’ and as ‘shoving it down people’s throats’, whilst heterosexuals could be

threatened into inactivity by the potential speculation that they must be championing change because they are also gay – ‘hey up, what’s that all about, is he gay?’, which, she concluded, results in not ‘see[ing] many heterosexual people talking about gay issues’. If a heterosexual does raise ‘gay issues’ this is at the least noteworthy given the groundswell of silence about lesbian and gay issues Geraldine describes. The potential speculation about non-heterosexuality from colleagues was, perhaps, more of a disincentive to act than comments from young people in the work place (“you’re gay, you’re gay” and they’ll laugh’). Donna remarked that she ‘just shrug[s] it off, because whatever goes on in my personal life has got absolutely nothing to do with them’. Both Rachel and Geraldine’s discussion of workplace barriers to positive change (prevalence of homophobia and sanctioning from colleagues) were presented in ways which suggested there were unambiguously pro-change, but recognized that this is difficult, the account of the workplace detracting from change below communicated a different meaning.

‘If I suddenly went and started putting up gay and lesbian posters erm some people may be frightened off from the [women’s youth] group. I don’t want that to sound offensive but you know because a lot of them say because we’re a women’s group they think you know we are lesbians to start with. So it’s very difficult because we want to be totally inclusive of all people’ (Janine).

In this extract, Janine provides a justification for her inactivity via reference to the assumption ‘they’ make of lesbianism, within her women only youth group. A baseline assumption of lesbianism provides a framework wherein it becomes justifiable that ‘some people’ (i.e., prejudiced heterosexuals) may be ‘frightened’ of being labeled lesbian. Thus her ‘sudden’ inclusion of lesbian and gay images in the workplace would be exclusive, rather than inclusive. Her bid ‘to be totally inclusive of all people’ ironically becomes a mandate for inactivity regarding lesbian and gay issues, rather than seeking to address the underlining issue of pervasive heterosexism within her youth group. In other words, she does not address or problematise the underlying question: what is the problem with being perceived as lesbian.

Again, Bernie constructs office culture as deterring his ability to effect change at work because: ‘the people in the office are all women, they wouldn’t talk to me about sex in general, heterosexual sex let alone homosexual sex [...] as a matter of fact they might think that if I raise the subject that I was being out of line a bit’. Here, Bernie focuses on LGB issues by formulating them as ‘sex’. As sex is normatively viewed as belonging within the private sphere not the public sphere, he is able to construct discussing LGB issues as inappropriate in the workplace, as ‘out of line’. ‘Out of line’ suggests that he would be stepping out of appropriate workplace boundaries, and therefore not addressing LGB issues is better, for him, than mentioning them. Interestingly, immediately after saying this he answers the question about the relevance of the trainer’s sexuality by reflecting on his own inadequacy as a gay advocate (‘it would be no good me standing up doing that course’). He describes himself as a 62 year old with ‘original cultural background’, who is viewed by others as a ‘boring old fart’ who ‘must have those erm in built prejudices because I am of that age’. This self depiction is congruent with, and feeds into why he talks about feeling that raising ‘sex’ as a topic of discussion at work is an inappropriate role for him and people similar to him. Therefore, Bernie’s understanding of how his colleagues see him is strongly tied to, and informs, the workplace barrier he describes. His account demonstrates that heterosexism (as presented by Geraldine above) is operating hand in hand with ageism to prevent positive change. The ascribed characteristics, he describes himself as having, are an additional barrier. Ironically, heterosexual men in senior positions who are prepared to challenge heterosexism may be accorded more respect, and thereby be rather more effective than younger people in less powerful positions (such as part-time youth workers, Donna and Rachel), whom Bernie (indirectly) assigns the task to.

This sense of inability to effect positive social change on behalf of lesbians and gay men appears a widespread issue. Ellis (2001b: 169) found one of the features of her focus group data with students discussing lesbian and gay human rights was ‘the notion of social change just occurring without any need for action’; the sense that change would naturally occur with the passage of time. She found that ‘for the most part, they did not indicate that they saw either themselves or specific others as having a role to play in creating that change’ (pp. 169-170). Nearly half (42%) of her questionnaire sample

reported that lesbian and gay issues were *not* their personal responsibility, and interestingly a number of her respondents expressed views which indicated that they felt *powerless* to personally effect change. She cites responses such as ‘I don’t think I have the ideas or will to actively promote homosexuality’ and ‘I would not know how to create useful positive changes’ (Ellis, 2002: 246). Training, provides an usual situation for overcoming some of the barriers individuals feel prevent them from acting in favour of lesbian and gay issues, including this sense of powerlessness that (some) of the interviewees conveyed in the face of workplace barriers (see below).

Talk About ‘Attitudes’

There were four main ways that trainees discussed their ‘thoughts’, ‘beliefs’ or ‘attitudes’ about training and about lesbians and gay men. Two of these involved the impact of the actual training session 1) training providing space for reflection; and 2) their ideas had changed. The second two provided more general commentary on their ‘attitudes’, either indirectly 3) preaching to the converted; or directly, 4) admission of (slight) homophobia.

(1) Space for Reflection

The literature on adult education has addressed the question of what participants hope to gain from continuing education and what differentiates those who participate and non-participants. Moreover, the ‘desire for knowledge’ as well as the desire to meet occupational as well as personal or self-development goals are claimed to be factors which those who do participate view as particularly beneficial from the experience (McGivney, 1993: 23). These claims were prevalent in my interviewees’ talk about their experience of LGAT. A prevalent account was that a positive aspect of training was ‘just being given the opportunity to talk about it really because it is something that isn’t talked about [...] it’s really good to talk about it’ (Geraldine). Having the opportunity to think, listen and talk about lesbian and gay issues with other people was overwhelmingly the aspect of training interviewees found most ‘enjoyable’. This sentiment was encapsulated in comments from 10 of the interviewees, who saw value in ‘being able to discuss the thing that is never spoken about’ (Bernie), and having ‘the chance to be able to talk about it really, because I have not had the opportunity before’ (Sharon). Therefore,

interviewees' accounts suggest that LGAT has been the first, or only, point in their professional lives that they have discussed or thought about issues pertaining to lesbians and gay men, heterosexism and homophobia.

Interviewees often made no explicit or direct comparison between attitudes prior to and after training, but they did make global reference to training 'stirring' their thoughts about lesbian and gay issues. Most of the interviewees made generic positive comments about the training experience being 'thought provoking' (James), having 'opened my eyes' (Lauren), and commented that they had found the experience 'useful' (Geraldine). They remarked that it had given them a 'broader perspective', which had heightened their awareness and 'reminded me that these issues do exist' (Tom), and had found that 'its interesting to think about this' (Ann). James described the experience as one that 'just sort of stirred the grey matter a little'; and one which had acted as 'a catalyst' which 'got me thinking about how I thought about things, which I probably wouldn't have done unless something had triggered it'. Geraldine 'left the day thinking about that [sexuality] more, and in my work since thinking about that more'. Therefore, trainees' talk indicated that the training experience functioned to carve out a space to enable them to 'consciously reflect' (James) on their perspectives about lesbian and gay issues.

The comments interviewees provided about talking about lesbian and gay issue suggest that they had found discussion a valuable and useful resource. Generally they did not, however, focus upon specific elements of discussion that were particularly salient for them, but talked in the general way illustrated above. One interviewee (Bill) provided a "helpful" account advising trainers that pro-lesbian and -gay arguments should be 'structured and logical', and counselled against 'banging people on the heads with it'.

I think discourse is one of the ways forward. [...] It really depends on how good the argument is to change your mind and that's why I'm saying it's got to be structured and logical. If we are converting minds and souls, that sort of element towards it, or not so much converting, but at least providing appreciation for them [lesbians and gay men], then that's one of the ways to do it. In the short term, I think it's the only way you're gonna do it. It's the same way you ain't gonna do it – convince everybody. As I said

about change, change is slow, but it is there. You [...] go around banging people on the heads with it. I don't think that's gonna convert hearts, souls.

Thus, the opportunity for discussion and an opportunity to reflect was an aspect of training that trainees talked about valuing. For some interviewees, having the opportunity to reflect encouraged them to discuss their past views or behaviour towards lesbians and gay men, which I go onto discuss in subsection 4 below.

(2) Ideas Changed

There were a number of accounts in these data where interviewees suggested that they had undergone some form of *change* in their views as a result of training. Trainees did not, in general, discuss experiencing dramatic shifts in attitudes, but they often made reference to increased clarity in their views and some form of alteration: 'it maybe changed a bit my opinion' (Ann), and they felt they had become 'perhaps a little more accepting than I was' (Matthew). Heightened clarity and awareness was a common way interviewees communicated that training had impacted on their views: 'it's made me much more aware' [...] 'It's made me a lot clearer on things, whereas before I was probably a little bit confused over certain issues and now things are much more clearer for me' (Donna). For those trainees who reported having given previous thought to heterosexism and lesbian and gay issues, they were able to suggest ways that their thinking had been progressed further and deepened, for instance Sharon said:

'I had thought about it [heterosexism] a bit, but I hadn't really thought about it in terms of the examples "what did you do at the weekend?" Actually doing that, you think about things on the one level as you're doing that [the exercise]. It can give you an understanding that's different from just being asked to think about it, that really sort of highlights living in that sort of- and having to censor what you say. So I think just like [I've gained] a deeper understanding really'.

There were occasions where interviewees recounted a *particular* change related to a localized issue. For instance, Janine recalled the impact that statistics the trainer presented about the higher number of LGB youth suicides had on her. She found that such factual information 'gave me a lot more (.) sympathy's not the right word but I can't

think of a better one at the minute, sort of [to] really think these particularly young men you know need help'. Lauren mentioned that training had made her realize 'that there are people getting beat up aren't there, and things are happening to people'. Lynn – in the extract below - recounted a change in her attitudes as they were expressed on the pre and post training homophobia scale (ATLG), in respect to *particular* statements ('a woman's homosexuality should *not* be a cause for job discrimination in any situation' and 'male homosexuals should *not* be allowed to teach in school').

'When I originally filled in the survey I put- the question about erm er should there be some jobs that gay men shouldn't do or lesbians shouldn't do. Most things were one extreme or the other but that I put in the middle. And then I thought about it afterwards cos I was thinking of erm say a lesbian woman say being in a position where you're in charge of a house where erm runaway girls young girls go to, or whatever, I thought that could be awkward and then I thought no. Cos you get you get heterosexual male school teachers erm abusing kids anyway, you get homosexual y'know and all this that and the other, and if you're a professional whatever you do then it shouldn't matter, and so that changed at the end ((laughs))' (Lynn)

The most striking feature of Lynn's account of change is that it is based on now viewing lesbians and gay men as 'professional whatever you do', and although she doesn't make explicit reference to holding the view prior to training that lesbians and gay men molest children, she alludes to this when referring to heterosexual males 'abusing kids'. She recounts as her reevaluation of her position the liberal notion that 'it [someone's sexuality] shouldn't matter', which conveys a newly acquired level of acceptance on her part. Others had 'learnt it [homosexuality] might be more common than I was aware of' (Tom), or had acquired specific knowledge about which terms for lesbians and gay men were acceptable or unacceptable. James commented that the 'subtleties' of the language used to refer to lesbians and gay men would have 'slipped me by' and 'if anyone said to me here is a list of you know three or four words which ones would be erm unchallenging would be acceptable to the gay community which ones would they actually take offence at, I don't think I would have got that right'. Therefore, though the majority of interviewees discussed not 'think[ing] any different than I did' (Lauren) in a global sense, they did mention *some* changes in their views resulting from training. The changes that

trainees discussed were, on the whole, circumspect and as the quotes demonstrate were attributed by the interviewees to an aspect of *training* – for instance the acquisition of new knowledge. Interestingly, the account which stands out as the most dramatic and wholesale shift in attitude hinged on liking the *trainer* and seeing him as ‘a decent bloke’. Donna had described how she had previously thought that gay men were ‘sick’ because her ex-husband had allegedly had an affair with another man whilst she was pregnant. The watershed in her perception of gay men (“oh my god” formulates this *as* a sudden realization, Frith & Kitzinger, 2001) was something she attributed to the trainer: ‘to actually hear him talking it was like, “oh my god, you are a decent bloke” [...] He seemed like a straight-forward (sic) kind of a guy and the only difference was he’d got a different sexuality from the majority of men [...] it changed my mind, it changed my whole opinion really, which was a good thing’.

(3) ‘Preaching to the Converted’

The notion that training was ‘preaching to the converted’ was closely tied to interviewees accounts of attitude change in over half of the interviewees’ talk (10 out of 16). Even though, as shown in the previous section, trainees generally discussed having undergone some form of change due to training this was mitigated by reference to their prior ‘attitude’. For instance, when Donna said ‘it’s made me much more aware’ embedded in her talk was reference to already having the ‘right’ attitude towards lesbians and gay men. Immediately after her comment about change she qualifies it by saying ‘not that I’ve not been equal towards gay people before’. Trainees were managing presenting themselves as having changed, or having learned something from training, whilst tempering this with not having changed *too much* and risk the danger of being seen as previously ‘homophobic’. Interviewees were keen to present the types of people who would attend LGAT as those with a ‘relatively liberal attitude’ (Bill) and, they often commented that, ‘the ones that you really want to go to these things are the ones that will

never go to them' (Lynn), or 'I think if you were wanting to change attitudes you'd need to talk to perhaps to a different group' (Beryl). Consider the examples below:

'I think one of the difficulties with things like that is it's always a bit like to an extent preaching to the converted' [...] 'I couldn't remember what I had said the first time, what number I had given [on the attitude scale], and I suppose it's important to try and get it right because it might influence, you know, your research if I put the wrong number down and I have gone and regressed when I don't mean to regress' (Ian)

'The trouble with such sessions is it's not bringing in people you really want to talk to' (Bernie)

'[It's] the converted talking to the converted a bit' (Beryl)

'You're certainly preaching to those people that have got an enlightened attitude, or a relatively liberal attitude. I can't imagine a homophobic turning up [...] I think predominantly you're preaching to the converted.' (Bill)

'It suffers from the problem that you run the risk of slightly preaching to the converted' (James)

These examples unambiguously categorise those who attend training as 'enlightened' or 'converted', prior to attending training rather than holding 'traditional and conservative attitudes' (Bill). Trainers also commented (see Chapter 4) that training was (to a certain extent) 'preaching to the converted', but trainers were far less invested in this portrayal of trainees, and more inclined to problematise liberal 'attitudes' displayed by those attending their sessions (as Sharon, Matthew and Geraldine do to a certain extent, below). I am not suggesting that trainees are wrongly or inaccurately categorizing themselves, but by describing those who attend LGAT in *this way* they are managing the potential assumption or (hypothetical) allegation that they *themselves* are prejudiced towards lesbians and gay men. By classifying the characteristics of trainees as a group as 'converted' they circumvented directly saying *I* am enlightened, whilst at the same time portraying trainees in this way indirectly positions them in this category, and gives authenticity to the position that LGAT, in fact, 'doesn't go to the right people' (Lynn, my emphasis). Lynn implies that herself and her colleagues are the 'wrong' people (i.e., not

homophobic), whilst Bill created a similar distinction by contrasting the ‘converted’ with a homophobic ‘yob element’ who would not attend training, thus indirectly distancing himself from “yobbish” views or behaviour. Similarly, Janine, a white woman, reported that ‘the Black and Asian people had more of a difficulty than the white people’ (Janine), and Bernie said ‘I wish you were talking to our boss. Our boss ought to be here now [...] The ones that want to hang draw and quarter anyone who is different – they won’t come’.

There was, however, also a sense in some of the interviewees’ accounts that training “repressed” the expression of homophobia, and that people were conforming to politically correct conventions about what they could and couldn’t say on the topic. For instance, Rachel commented that there were men in her workplace who used gay as a term of abuse, but in the context of training would know that it ‘wouldn’t be a good idea’ to talk in that way, thus because of the context of training she ‘wouldn’t expect anyone to come out with something that was, I don’t know, homophobic or anything like that’ (Rachel). Similarly, Matthew felt that the older members of the group were not actually as accepting as they felt they ought to be: ‘the older people seemed sort of, they had the opinion that they were meant to accept it, but perhaps they didn’t’. One interviewee characterized this as a ‘missed opportunity’:

‘We’re a bunch of psychologists and we’re supposed to all be right on and everything. ((pause)) I feel like it was a missed opportunity in a way because I do feel like not everybody’s honest, and people are too scared to say what they want, and everybody’s worried about being erm anti-gay really and I think there is that feeling no matter how nice everybody is about it’ (Geraldine)

Here Geraldine describes the group as not being ‘honest’, and how behaving in a ‘nice’ ‘right on’ way provides a smoke-screen for underlying ‘anti-gay’ views. In these examples the interviewees described this “dishonesty” as a characteristic of the group *at large*, or of certain members of the group (older members, ‘homophobic’ male colleagues, or Black and Asian co-workers). Only one interviewee, Sharon, discussed this issue directly in relation to herself. She talked about feeling a ‘fear of saying the wrong thing, and the fear of saying something that’s not a p.c. thing to say’. Before and after this (potential) admission of “hidden” prejudice she grounded her ‘fear’ in the wider context,

in that she ‘find[s] [it] in the whole of equal opportunities training, not just on the one of sexuality’. Immediately afterwards she said: ‘I would like to think that I am quite aware, and quite informed, and quite erm open and you know I wouldn’t be prejudiced’. Sharon, therefore, describes the “problem” differently to Rachel, Matthew and Geraldine. The “problem” being the semantics attached to what individuals say in training, and the relationship between what people say in training and what they “really” mean. Sharon draws a distinction between ‘saying the wrong thing’ and her underlying views which are non-prejudiced, whilst the others reverse this in their accounts, suggesting that their colleagues *know* how to say things to present themselves as non-prejudiced, but underneath their talk lies discomfort or non acceptance of LGB sexualities³.

(4) Admission of (Slight) Homophobia

A fourth way that interviewees discussed their own, and others’ attitudes was by “confessing” some issue or difficulty they had/have with lesbian and gay issues. This was alluded to in their talk about the training context “repressing” the real views trainees held about the topic, but there were more obvious references to this in these data. Interestingly, not all of the interviewees talked about their attitudes in this way (six out of 16), perhaps because it is a risky strategy to ‘pull off’ without damaging your investment in being ‘seen’ as a liberal individual. Interviewees who did profess some slight amount of homophobia about their own character did pull this off well, in various ways. One trainee, Bernie, commented that training ‘makes me think back, it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable to tell you the truth [...] what my attitudes have been to people who’ve I’ve considered to be different, queer is the word I would have used years ago, always be queer and er I’m not terribly proud actually of my attitudes’. Similarly, Tom discussed taunting an ‘odd boy’ at school ‘we’d get in a group and go “bumboy, bumboy” and we’d turn round and we’d leg it, you see’. Training had “reminded” him about his behaviour as ‘a lad’ because bumboy was one of the words discussed during the language exercise and

³ Note that the trainees’ conceptualisations of ‘attitudes’ mirror the views expressed about this by the trainers.

he recounted in interview how now as an adult it was ‘a bit embarrassing to think how you behaved as a boy’. Consider the example below:

‘If I was perfectly honest the answer is ermmerm slightly [uncomfortable] ((laughs)) and I don’t know quite how to describe it. I don’t have an issue or problem with people who are gay. I I have good friends who are openly gay and it is not an issue. Occasionally I find myself running into a social situation in which, if I am perfectly honest, I do feel slightly uncomfortable, and I I I am sort of thinking that I shouldn’t and I I do, and I think that the way I feel about that has actually changed over the years’ (James)

In these extracts the interviewees are talking about their attitudes in *the past* which puts some temporal distance between their views then and the current situation. This way of talking about attitudes suggests progress or improvement over time (often implicitly attributed to simply the passage of time); James said his feelings had ‘changed over the years’ and Bernie said his ‘views have changed radically over the years’. The admissions of holding heterosexist views *in the present* were manifest in very ‘mild’ forms, in phrases such as being ‘a bit intolerant’ (Ann), or finding lesbian and gay issues topics that they did not ‘discuss very easily’ (Bernie). Bernie discussed still having ‘reservations’, which included ‘gays in the army erm same sex couples bringing up children cos again I think in terms of the best way to bring a child up is in a family’. Thus, he manages listing rather serious anti-lesbian and –gay views by formulating them rather benignly as ‘reservations’. Similarly James, above, described himself as ‘occasionally’ ‘feel[ing] slightly uncomfortable’. Consider the confessional quality of the extract below:

‘I feel a bit ashamed to say but sitting with [the] person my partner, and erm and she did not know many of the terms, or many famous people, or anything like that who were gay or whatever, and I was feeling she might think “I am gay” do you know what I mean. I know too much’ (Ian)

Ian is discussing how he felt during generating terms for the language exercise. He begins with ‘I feel a bit ashamed to say...’; ‘ashamed’ implies both sheepishness and contrition. He presents himself in a way reminiscent of therapeutic endeavors wherein a commitment to dealing with a particular ‘problem’ is initiated by the acknowledgement

that there is a problem in the first place. However, having ‘too much’ knowledge about lesbian and gay issues suggests that he is an aware, informed person. Therefore, the negative connotation that could be attributed to his ashamed ‘feeling’ of perhaps being perceived as a gay man is tempered by its basis in knowledge. It is, of course, positive in the context of the interview and more broadly, that he displays that he is knowledgeable about lesbian and gay issues. He constructs his knowledge as the basis for the contention that he may be gay which functions to take the sting out of his “confession” of implied discomfort.

In this section, and the previous three sections, I have described the ways in which trainees talked about their ‘attitudes’ in direct and indirect ways. I have explored the ways interviewees discussed training being a space for them to reflect on their views about lesbians and gay men, how they discussed changes in their ideas as a result of training, and how they discussed the ‘attitudes’ of the group and their own views. In these sections I have also tried to explicate a number of strategies trainees use to *manage* talk about ‘attitudes’ and highlight the sensitivity they displayed to whether, or how, or to what extent they wanted to claim that they are, or are not ‘prejudiced’.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINERS AND TRAINING

It has been suggested that ‘successful evaluation depends upon a commitment to change whenever it is possible to do so’ (R. Edwards, 1991: 80; Goldstein, 1990). Evaluation is widely conceptualized as a iterative process; dubbed an ‘evaluation cycle’ (A. Clarke, 1999; Scriven, 1991; Shaw, 1999). The idea is that decisions are taken to modify practice on the basis on what is learned about it. In keeping with this, the remainder of this chapter is concerned with suggestions for ways in which trainers could modify training based on the interviewees’ accounts because they ‘have real and material consequences’ (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996: 26). I make these suggestions in spite of how the trainees’ interview talk is treated epistemologically. In this Chapter I have treated their interview talk as ‘discourse’ and have avoided making realist claims that their talk reflects underlying ‘true’ views, opinions and beliefs. Rather, I have explored some of the ways that their talk functions (e.g., creating distance between themselves and being

‘homophobic’ by recounting *past* anti-lesbian/gay behaviour), whilst balancing this with a pragmatic focus on which aspects of their experience they discussed being successful and less successful.

Therefore, in the context of LGAT I now try to extend and refocus the analysis onto practical changes that trainers could make to the structure and operation of training based upon what, and how, interviewees talked about it. I take “seriously” trainees’ discourse in providing a basis from which training could be altered. In the following sections I explore: a) how trainers could overcome the barriers interviewees described preventing them from applying training at work; and b) how trainers could deal with the ways interviewees presented their own (and others) attitudes.

Overcoming ‘Barriers’ to the Application of Training

First, I discuss the barriers trainees raised about training itself. Presenting general material about LGB issues and societal heterosexism are not meeting trainees’ expressed need for specific information applicable to their work (see also Chapter 8, discussion of professional practice questions). The structure of training (i.e., not being concrete enough) was presented by interviewees as being a major hindrance to the application of training in their professional work contexts. The provision of plentiful (and relevant) case studies should be a key objective for trainers. Training should be structured in such a way that case studies and scenarios are not lost or side-lined. For example, in the warden’s training session (LGAT 6) the trainers had prepared case studies which they felt were appropriate to the halls of residence and University contexts. However, these were timetabled as the last exercise in the session and the trainers ran out of time because they had not allocated times to be spent on the opening exercises, and they allowed the group to digress onto tangential topics. These data also suggest that it is not sufficient for trainers to assume that (heterosexual) trainees can extrapolate from their own experiences; they need to be provided with second-hand experiences of, for instance, coming out. Encouraging trainees ‘to think’ is not enough, and being told how to react to an individual’s coming out is something that trainers can convey to trainees, by suggesting positive comments that they can make, or by asking them to role-play coming

out scenarios. A related issue trainees raised was wanting to received *specific* advice about how to behave and act and what to say in *particular* situations (like ‘next time somebody says x, I will say “hold on a minute, that’s not appropriate...’, Bernie). It is telling that none of the interviewees had attended a session where they had undergone the Challenging Heterosexism pair work exercise (discussed in Chapter 4). This exercise makes explicit, and encourages trainees to rehearse, how they would personally respond to homophobic and heterosexist comments. Interviewees’ comments about relevance and applicability highlight that this type of exercise, which entails rehearsing what they might actually say and/or do when faced with heterosexism, is important to them.

Second, there are a number of ways trainers could deal with the work place and other external barriers interviewees discussed. An issue for trainers may be finding a way of communicating to (particularly, but not exclusively) older males the importance of them *in particularly* raising LGB sexuality as a topic for discussion. Those in more powerful positions, should be encouraged to recognize that they have more scope (and, the argument would go, therefore more obligation) to effect change at work. Evidently, different workplaces provide different conditions and ‘ways in’ to talking about (homo)sexuality, but attending an LGAT course provides an opportunity for all trainees to raise the subject with work colleagues as attending the course provides a legitimate initial opening line (‘I went on a course about sexuality today/yesterday/last week and...’). A simple suggestion trainers could make is advising trainees that on their return to work that they initiate such a conversation using those parameters. As a number of interviewees (especially in LGAT6) viewed action as being contingent on the presence of visible LGBs at work, it is important that trainers communicate that even if LGBs are not visible they do exist in their work settings. Pro-LGB behaviour, trainers should emphasis, needs to be more widespread as it is beneficial to *all* students (or clients, service users, or colleagues). Trainees are asking for the practical examples that trainers provide to be *relevant* to them *in particular*. However, the group may not be receptive to the implications of relevant examples. For example, in LGAT6 the (female) trainer attempted to illustrate that homophobia was an issue in the group’s University, by providing an account of ‘hostile’ reactions to the University’s LGB group. Consider how the information was received by the trainees:

- FT1: The LGB group had a spate of homophobic, hostile e-mails sent to them because they sent a blanket e-mail around the university saying y'know this is our organization, this is what we're about [...] They had a whole host of e-mails back that were quite nasty and abusive and y'know "you shouldn't, you've got no right to be here, and what are you doing, and why are you kind of"-
- Nekesh: Yeah, but that's- we've 5 000 students in halls-
- Irene: But, can I just say something, if you were to send an e-mail out saying erm "we are pro-black" for example, you would get that sort of response from a certain percentage of people.
- Nekesh: Or "we are pro-white" whatever.
- Irene: Or pro-white or whatever you would get that sort of response from a certain percent of people. I mean it's just really in a sense y'know-
- James: Would you get it for pro er heterosexual, would you get it from gays, you wouldn't.
- Nekesh: You would get it from whatever.

The response from the Nekesh and Irene indicates that they saw the story not as being indicative of heterosexism on campus per se, but rather as forming part of phenomenon whereby a 'percentage' of any group (black, white, gay, heterosexual) would inevitably react negatively to another group. The challenge here for trainers is not just to 'collect' locally relevant incidents of homophobia for pedagogic purposes, (e.g., graffiti written on the wall of a local gay club) and then reel that off as a *fait accompli* but to *present* the story in such a way as to head off liberal and discounting reactions from the group. One way of doing this would be to preempt objections and build them into the account – for instance, 'you may think that this something that would happen to any group on campus but...'.

Trainees developing and making a commitment to implement 'action points' at work is another concrete method of attempting to encourage some workplace change. The 'what can you do to make your workplace more LGB-friendly?' exercise common in the core data set (see Chapter 4) is also a mechanism for looking at practical change in people's own workplaces. Yet, the up-beat motivational and implementation focus of the task does

not address some of the dilemmas and difficulties trainees raised as barriers in interview. (Some of) the barriers which trainees described were not insignificant, or easily surmountable. Interestingly, individual difficulties based on workplace barriers were those described by interviewees, there was little sense of team working or collective action against heterosexism in the workplace in interviewees' accounts⁴. Pervasive and ingrained heterosexism (as in Rachel's account), or workplace norms silencing the ability to address sexuality (as in Geraldine's account) would be arduous to alter at the level of the individual, and their accounts imply this. The challenge for trainers is to breakdown positive action into more easily accomplished, and achievable targets, whilst also emphasizing *collective* responsibility. This may necessitate trainers gaining a far more detailed picture of trainees' workplaces so they can pitch change to them at an appropriate level. Or, workplace barriers could be treated as part of the topic of training and incorporated into exercises with a problem solving approach. For instance, asking groups to generate changes, then identify barriers to change, and then discuss solutions to the barriers. In addition a *pre*-training task could be set for trainees which encourages them to focus on this issue. They could be asked to describe a time when they felt lesbian and gay issues were relevant to their work, and asked to write down things such as 'what happened?' 'what did you do?' 'did you feel that you knew/understood how to deal with it?', and 'if not what advice would be useful?'.

Addressing How Trainees Talk about Attitudes

Trainers' viewed some positive alteration in trainees' opinions about lesbians and gay men as the pinnacle of 'successful' training, but they also claimed that this was very difficult to achieve. Typical of the trainers' perspective was the comment from Simon that: 'I don't expect to [...] change like years and years of er ways of thinking but what we do end up doing is making them think'. Trainees' talk about self-reflection suggests that the interviewees were constructing an account of training as an opportunity, rather than an obligation or chore for busy professionals. This may bode well for training as an enterprise, and provides very useful support for the existence of LGAT. As does the

⁴ Of note is that the only reference to collective working was from a trainee whose 'boss' is a lesbian ('we're gonna really cover everything anyway, and then sexuality will be a big thing').

prevalence of accounts of some form of change in ideas. As interviewees mostly talked in very general terms about training stirring their thoughts the times when they mentioned a *specific* exercise or piece of factual information are of note for those concerned with training content. The language exercise, the ‘what did you do at the weekend?’ activity and statistics about the incidence of LGB suicide attempts were all mentioned by interviewees in the context of having an influence on their ideas about LGB issues.

However, there are implications for training in *how* interviewees depicted attitudes. Trainers may want to consider how they could undermine the investment trainees seemingly have in presenting themselves as ‘the converted’. This could entail trainers *building on* and working with, rather than against, this self-portrayal and fostering the view that their enlightened position creates a mandate for positive action. In other words, trainers could actively praise trainees for being individuals that fall into this category and talk in ways which strongly presume that they share the values of the trainer and subsequently *want* to behave in a pro-lesbian and –gay manner. Statements from the trainer beginning ‘As we all know....’ or ‘You’ll be aware of X, but because some people are prejudiced we need to...’ could bolster trainees’ discourse in a way which closely ties it to *activity* on behalf of lesbians and gay men rather than – as claiming membership of this category could function – inactivity. Trainers need to communicate to trainees that *because* they are the enlightened ones they have a duty to act. Encouraging trainees to see themselves as a ‘minority’, as an island in a sea of non-participating homophobic individuals could enable this as well. Practically, trainers could do this by presenting statistics from opinion polls and large-scale (ideally British in the case of my data) social attitudes surveys which typically indicate the widespread nature of anti-lesbian and –gay opinion, and by liberally using phrases along the lines of ‘British Social Attitudes Surveys have discovered that nearly 75% of respondents believe that homosexual relations are “morally wrong”’ (Humphrey, 1999a: 136).

Interviewees’ admissions of ‘homophobia’ as they were expressed in the interview materials could be dealt with directly as part of the content of training, in a way which is

attentive to the language they used to construct their accounts. Their accounts of (particularly) their own ‘attitudes’ were inextricably intertwined with ‘social desirability’ (Robson, 2000: 93) or a concern to appear ‘non-prejudiced’. Rather than trainers using ideologically charged (and potentially threatening) language such as ‘homophobia’ and ‘prejudice’ an exercise could be designed which works *with* and incorporates the terms that trainees use to describe their views. For instance, trainees could be asked to write down (perhaps anonymously) an incident where they had felt ‘uncomfortable’ with lesbians and/or gay men, or list any ‘reservations’ they might have about lesbian and gay issues. These could then be pooled and discussed as a group, with the aim of reducing ‘discomfort’ and overcoming ‘reservations’.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have documented the scope, and form, of interviewees’ talk on a number of topics: the value they attach to training being practically orientated; the barriers they discussed preventing them from applying training in the workplace; the way they talked about training providing a space for reflection on their views; the influence training had on their views; and the ways they portrayed their own and others attitudes about lesbians and gay men.

Evaluation has been described as referring ‘to the use of information to assess whether there is a gap between “what is” and “what should be” or “what could be”, and if there is, how might it be closed’ (Amnesty International, 2001: 282). This chapter highlighted this transparent view of evaluation is problematic, for a number of reasons: “what is” and “what should be” is dependent on who discusses (and *how* they discuss) an intervention; and on whose criteria should an intervention be modified? Training would be a different enterprise if it focused exclusively on the practical tips that trainees say that they want. This is antithetical to the political agenda trainers have to communicate the structural and pervasive nature of heterosexism and oppression lesbians and gay men experience. Politically, training would be an impoverished shadow of its former self if trainers abandoned their agenda, in favour of implementing (whole-scale) trainees’ wish to merely be told what to do, without being encouraged to develop a heightened awareness

of heterosexism. However, evaluation provides a mandate for trainers taking what trainees want ‘seriously’: so what, and how, to implement evaluative information presents a dilemma for those interested in ‘improving’ training. In the next chapter, I move away from issues of evaluation, and shift to concentrating solely on how subtle forms of heterosexism in talk are constructed.

Chapter 7

Mundane Heterosexism: A discursive approach

‘The insidious character of heteronormativity must be recognized...It is not simply a matter of calling someone a “fag” or a “dyke”. The ideology of heterosexual superiority infests itself in all levels of communicative practice [...] The resistance to opening up these spaces is enormous, as there are many layers and stratifications that embed heteronormativity and fuel the flames of heterosexism’ (Nakayama, 1998: 117 & 119).

In this chapter I use discourse analysis, combined with lesbian feminist politics, to explore subtle forms of heterosexism, or ‘mundane heterosexism’, as they were manifest in the training sessions in my core data set (and beyond). This chapter builds on some of the themes I identified in trainers’ talk in Chapter 5 (i.e., liberalism), and extends and develops the type of broad discourse analysis I conducted in Chapter 6. The aim of this chapter is to present the argument to feminist psychologists, lesbian and gay psychologists and researchers more generally that subtle forms of heterosexism are worthy of our interrogation. As lesbian theorist Sarah Hoagland (1988: 539) remarks, language is an interesting focus of inquiry because of ‘its insidiousness as a means of maintaining a political perspective, and because of its susceptibility to change once we become aware’. I analyse three discourses of mundane heterosexism, namely: 1) ‘prejudice against the heterosexual’; 2) ‘non-heterosexuality as a deficit’; and 3) ‘refusing diversity’. I conclude this chapter by discussing two strategies for challenging mundane heterosexism: interactional counter-arguments; and broader societal campaigns. Finally, I advocate the necessity of further detailed analyses of the construction of mundane heterosexism, and stress the importance, for social change, of turning our analytic focus to often “unnoticed” forms of heterosexism.

It is well recognised that the ‘manifestations and consequences of prejudice against women, racial and ethnic minorities, and gay men and lesbians share common ground’ (Gannon, 1999: 43), but feminist psychology is often heterosexist (Kitzinger, 1996), and has been as guilty as other areas of feminism and psychology of omitting, marginalising and misrepresenting lesbian (and gay) experience (Peel, 2001a). Theorising ordinary, everyday heterosexism is as challenging as understanding and undermining other oppressive practices, because as Hill (1995: 146) remarks, ‘unlike

other prejudices, heterocentric assumptions are so beguiling they go undetected by even the most equity-sensitive individuals'. This makes them very difficult first to identify, and then to challenge. Some researchers have claimed that 'out-group members may [be]...minimizing (or even overlooking) the impact of an indirect racist message' (Leets & Giles, 1997: 278), and there is strong reason to expect the same (if not worse) of heterosexism. My argument in this chapter is that although feminist psychology has a good record of theorising sexism in everyday life (Benokraitis, 1997b; Ronai et al., 1997) it needs to pay more attention to 'mundane' unnoticed and (normatively) unnoticeable incidents of *heterosexism* (c.f. Billig's 1995 term 'banal nationalism'). Mundane heterosexism is an integral, normative, part of social life (Braun, 2000a; Pharr, 1995), and only by focusing at this level can it (potentially) be undermined.

Understandings of Subtle Sexism

Conceptualising and investigating resistance and power in women's everyday social practices has been an ongoing concern for feminism (Bosworth, 1999; Fisher & Davis, 1993; Robinson, 1997). There is a small, but growing literature which provides space 'for uncovering the subtle and ambivalent ways women may be negotiating at the margins of power, sometimes constrained by but also resisting and even undermining asymmetrical power structures (Fisher & Davis: 6; Gay, 1997). It has been emphasised that currently feminist research involves 'interpreting how power/knowledge/resistance work in the local, heterogeneous context of discursive production' (Fisher & Davis, 1993: 10). The feminist literature on women's resistance celebrates and explores women's abilities to negotiate and transform hegemonic cultural practices – despite structural and symbolic constraints - and gives central importance to women's agency and ability to counter insidious sexism in many forms.

Feminists have begun to address subtle sexist language (e.g., Aapola & Kangas, 1996). 'Micro inequalities' (Haslett & Lipman, 1997) or subtle sexism has been defined as:

'the unequal and harmful treatment of women that is typically less visible and obvious than blatant sex discrimination. It is often not noticed because most people have internalised subtle sexist behavior as "normal", "natural", or

“acceptable”...Subtle sex discrimination is difficult to document because many people do not perceive it as serious or harmful’ (Benokraitis, 1997a: 11).

Benokraitis (1997a) identified nine types of subtle sex discrimination: condescending chivalry; supportive discouragement; friendly harassment; subjective objectification; radiant devaluation; liberated sexism; benevolent exploitation; considerate domination; and collegial exclusion, which are all forms of sexism which are ‘friendly at face value but ha[ve] pernicious consequences’ (p. 14). Since what is commonly referred to as the ‘turn to language’ in the social sciences feminist work has been concerned with theorising sexist language and addressing such questions as ‘in what ways does language – in structure, content, and daily usage – reflect and help constitute sexual inequality?’ (Kramer et al., 1978, cited in Cameron 1998b: 946-7; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1995). Deborah Cameron (1998a: 11) has rightly pointed out that ‘there is a certain imprecision about many uses of the term ‘sexist language’; the term homogenizes, and this can disguise the fact that sexist assumptions enter into language at various levels, from morphology [e.g., word endings] ...to the stylistic conventions of particular registers and fields of discourse’. Due to the ‘slippery heterogeneity’ of sexist language Sara Mills has emphasised that ‘attempts at reforming sexism in language are doomed to failure if they simply focus on the eradication of certain phrases or words’ (Mills, 1998: 236).

It has been suggested that overt examples of sexism (and racism) are easy to challenge because they are ‘very easy to identify’ (Mills, 1998: 247). That is not the case with indirect forms of sexism. Feminists are clear that ‘the first step is to recognise it [subtle sexism]. The next step is to talk about it and expose it at every opportunity’ (Benokraitis, 1997a: 27). This task is not one that is either easy or straightforward, as responding to ‘micro inequalities’ is especially difficult as ‘they are irrational, intermittent, subtle, and infinitely varied’ and demand considerable time and energy because they are so frequent (Haslett & Lipman, 1997: 37). As Haslett and Lipman describe it ‘responding to micro inequalities is difficult and there appears to be little pay off for speaking out. However, to not respond is to become a tacit accomplice’ (1997: 51). So, within feminist research, the need to understand and to directly challenge subtle sexism has been seen as a priority.

There have been parallels drawn with mainstream and feminist work, which seem closely related where lesbian and gay issues are at issue, for instance in relation to abuse in lesbian relationships. Ristock (1997: 286), for example points out that violence within lesbian relationships will only be fully acknowledged and understood when ‘constraining heterosexist discourses, both mainstream and feminist, are unsettled’. It has been noted that because sexuality is often included under ‘gender’ ‘sexuality is getting more attention in much of the research than it did in the past’ (Benokraitis, 1997a: 24). I suggest that this is not sufficient, and that although related to gender, sexuality should be considered in its own right. There have been some exceptions that have incorporated heterosexism explicitly as part of an analysis of gender. For example, Susan Murray’s research - looking at the subtle sexism men encounter when engaged in child care work - implicates heterosexism at the ‘core of the idea that white men who do child care are “suspect”’ (Murray, 1997: 149). She notes that ‘subtle heterosexism...is one of the more effective tools in maintaining gender inequality’ (p. 150). There has, therefore, been *some* consideration of the intersection and relationship between different forms of oppression, but certainly there has not been enough attention given to heterosexism specifically.

Discourse Analysis and Prejudice Talk

Discourse Analysis has been used to analyse prejudice talk including talk about ‘race’ (Augoustinos et al., 1999; Rapley, 1998; Van Dijk, 1997; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), sexism (e.g., Gill, 1993; Kitinger & Thomas, 1995), and gender (Speer, 2001; Stokoe, 1998, 2000). I use DA to analyse heterosexist talk. Some discursive work has shown how “‘liberal and egalitarian values” are selectively drawn on and reworked, sometimes to racist and authoritarian effect’ (Wetherell & Potter, 1992: 92). Wetherell and Potter (1992: 198), in their discussion of Pakeha New Zealanders interview talk about Maoris, point out that the advantage of a discourse analytic approach to these data ‘is that it provides a means of tracking the twists and turns of argument and the Janus face of liberalism as contradictions are fully utilized in practice’. Wetherell and Potter (1992: 211) discuss what they call the ‘prejudice problematic’ which is talk ‘characterised by circumambulation and avoidance. Everybody wants to be tolerant and nobody wants to be prejudiced’. Billig’s (1978) analysis of members of the British National Party (BNP) talking, for instance,

highlighted that even those individuals who would intuitively expect to clearly and openly state racist and sexist views do not, because they want to appear convincing. The need to be seen as rational and ‘unprejudiced’ takes precedent. For example, some of his BNP interviewees ‘rejected completely any imputation of fascism’ (p.293). Thus my analyses of ‘heterosexist’ talk draws upon concepts, procedures, and findings developed in discursive psychology.

The Shift to Heterosexism

In lesbian and gay psychology there has been a shift from the consideration of more overt signs of homophobia toward a preference for the term heterosexism¹ (also known as institutional homophobia, McKee et al., 1994; and cultural heterosexism, Herek, 1990). This gradual movement relates to the development of lesbian and gay psychology as a distinct sub-field within psychology – from an initial need to establish and justify its very presence within psychology. For that reason (historically) a focus on more extreme manifestations of prejudice have been essential. This foregrounds the relative “luxury” of attempts to theorize more subtle forms of anti-lesbian and anti-gay oppression. Comparatively recently the institution of heterosexuality has been problematized as being neither universal, essential or ahistorical (e.g., Rich, 1980). As Katz (1990: 7) has pointed out ‘by not studying the heterosexual idea in history, analysts of sex, gay and straight, have continued to privilege the “normal” and “natural” at the expense of the “abnormal” and “unnatural”’. Lesbian and gay psychology’s prior focus on homosexuals, however, inevitably prefigures any consideration of heterosexist society and discourse. The domination of essentialist approaches perhaps foregrounds social constructionist theorizing, as essentialism ‘rather naturally spring[s] from hostile times’ (Bohan & Russell, 1999: 184). In other words, the adoption of essentialism is ‘reinforced by proximity to confrontation’ (Smith & Windes, 2000: 103). Inevitably, the socio-cultural context shapes the possibilities for psychological enquiry. The current societal norm(s) founded on liberalism, and against extreme expressions of prejudice

¹ Heterosexism, of course, cannot ‘exist’ without a concept of heterosexuality. Katz (1990: 13), pinpointed the ‘debut’ of the “modern American heterosexual” between the years 1892 and 1900 when medical and psychological scholars and practitioners began to use the term in juxtaposition to its ‘homosexual’ counterpart. When the terms heterosexual was initially used it was: ‘perceived as ambivalent procreators, the heterosexual did not at first exemplify the quintessence of the normal.’

create the cultural conditions for a consideration of more covert forms of homonegativity.

Liberal Principles, Common-Sense and Method

Lesbian and gay awareness training focuses at the level of the individual, and individualism forms a component of liberal principles. In relation to anti-racist training Judith Katz (1978: vii) notes that whites should reflect on their (our/my) prejudice and racism 'no matter how painful the self-probing may be', and the ideology of individual attitude change is also imbued in LGAT. That is not to say that training cannot be useful in creating change: 'workshops may sometimes radically change the discourse of the selected *individuals* attending' (Wetherell & Potter 1992: 218, my emphasis). However, arguably training workshops do not differ dramatically from society in general, as liberal principles - such as meritocracy, freedom of the individual and so on - are often viewed as common-sense, cultural 'common-places' (Billig, 1996). Liberalism is problematic because 'an understanding of the structured and patterned power relations...[is] beyond the purview of liberalism' (Brickell, 2001: 214). The following extracts, I identify as instances of 'mundane heterosexism' in this chapter, are embedded within a broadly liberal framework.

I have focused on three 'types' of mundane heterosexism, which are particularly tractable from a lesbian feminist position. The themes closely resemble what Wetherell and Potter (1992: 90) call 'interpretative repertoires' (see Chapter 2). It is worth emphasising that these categories are closely interlinked and operate within the confines of liberal ideology. In Chapter 5 I described the (problematic) liberal sentiments that trainers ascribed to trainees, such as: 'there's not a homophobic bone in my body'; 'I treat everyone the same'; and 'I don't go round shouting that I'm heterosexual'. These liberal statements are premised on an individualised notion of sexuality, which stresses a false equivalence between lesbians (and gay men) and heterosexuals and down plays any difference between being lesbian/gay and being heterosexual. I argue that this is problematic as it functions to reinscribe a heterosexist norm.

1) Prejudice Against the Heterosexual

In this section I provide three examples of heterosexuals inverting pervasive cultural heterosexism and suggesting reverse discrimination – or at least *equal* discrimination of heterosexuals and homosexuals - is occurring. This results in trainees claiming (either directly or indirectly) that there is ‘prejudice against the heterosexual’. The first extract is taken from LGAT 6, the training session with wardens and sub-wardens at the point where they are holding a discussion about sexuality and the implications of this for the allocation of students to shared rooms in halls of residence.

Extract 1

- Nekesh: What I don’t know what do with, to do about it is that if you have two people gay or lesbian they come and share a room together compare them to a male and female sharing a room together there is no difference. But we stop male and female sharing a room together
- Bill: I was gonna say that
- Nekesh: But we don’t stop two of the same sex therefore there is discrimination here against, the heterosexual in a way.
- MT1 (Ben): But do you think realistically, that men and women are having sex with each other, at this university?

The heterosexism in this extract is not in the statement that there is prejudice against the heterosexual *per se*, but in the normative assumption that the rule of room sharing is premised on, i.e., men and women cannot share a room because they might be attracted to each other. One of the strongest arguments an oppressed group has is that the world, society, norms and so on are discriminatory and stacked against us. Here however, Nekesh exploits this “trump card” and plays it against lesbians and gay men. First, he emphasises there is no difference between a man and a woman and two gay men or two lesbians sharing a room. So he assumes a false equivalence. More importantly, he uses this in order to suggest heterosexuals suffer discrimination. However, in doing this, he ignores the fact that the rule that couples cannot share is premised solely on heterosexual couples. ‘The rule’ does not take into account lesbians and gay men, therefore by omission lesbians and gay men slip through a loophole and can (in principle) share rooms together, as originally only heterosexuals were considered in room allocation. Nekesh uses a powerful argument used by

lesbians and gay men (and other oppressed groups) against us, by highlighting the discrimination heterosexuals may face as a result of this, rather than showing awareness of the continual and pervasive marginalisation lesbians and gay men experience given social norms based on compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980). In addition, by formulating ‘the rule’ of room sharing in this way, and coming to the conclusion that heterosexuals are suffering (he is not alone in this, Bill agrees by saying he was going to raise this very point himself) Nekesh negates any challenge to the heterosexist premise the rule of room sharing is based on. He could, for instance, have concluded that the rule is fundamentally heterosexist and they need to consider a way of allocating shared rooms in halls that takes into account all sexualities (instead of just heterosexuality), but he does not. In extract 2, taken from LGAT 13 with police officers, ‘prejudice against the heterosexual’ occurs in a more subtle form:

Extract 2

- FT1: I went for a smear erm, a couple of years ago now, and the practice nurse said to me “are you having sex” and I said “yes” she said “what contraceptive do you use”. I said “I don’t”
(laughter)
FT1: And erm I could see these cogs turning really really slowly
(laughter)
Trainer: And I thought now what do I do is she gonna make this mental leap herself
(laughter)
FT1: Am I gonna have to tell cos what do I do, and in the end I told her because I thought I could I literally
Kathy: I could be here all day
FT1: And so she said to me again “but you are having sex” you know and it’s because we- the way that we interact with other people
Kathy: Socialized yeah
FT1: It’s it’s this built in assumption that we have yeah
Sally: Can I also say Niki [trainer’s name] I I’ve got the exactly the same example. I went for a smear test -and this goes no further in this room obviously these guys know me but- I had a smear test and she asked me the usual questions, same as you, are you having sex “yes I am” are you using contraceptive “no I’m not” “oh right, are you trying to have a baby then” “no I’m not my partner is sterile” “oh right okay” and again massive assumptions were made
Kathy: Mm
Sally: And I thought “well do I look as if I’m trying to have a baby” you know
Trainer: Mm
Sally: And why why would I be having a baby why couldn’t I be practicing other forms of contraception other than being on the pill or using condoms

The trainer has attempted to convey to the group that one of the ways that heterosexism operates is through the pervasive assumption that everyone is

heterosexual, and therefore sex inevitably constitutes penetrative heterosex. She does this by describing an incident where a practice nurse struggles ('I could see these cogs turning really really slowly') to reconcile an individual having sex with not using contraceptives and being lesbian. Immediately after this exchange a gay man sitting in the group reinforces the trainer's message by stating: 'what we're saying about living in a heterosexist world, it's this assumption that everything and everybody is heterosexual, so you don't think outside of that box'. There is a lot going on in this extract. It could be argued, for instance, that by providing an account regarding smear tests after the trainer's account that Sally is empathising with the plight of women and the interactions they have with health professionals.

However, Sally's story about her experience of having a smear test is *competing* with the trainer's. Sally responds to the trainer's example by providing a story from her own experience, which she introduces as 'exactly the same example'. She concludes her story by again emphasising the parallel between the trainer's and her own experiences 'again massive assumptions were made'. There is indignation in her complaint against the assumptions being made about her relationship with her sterile male partner. Her phrase 'well do I look as if I'm trying to have a baby' displays her sense of righteous anger and the wrongfulness of the nurse's assumption.

What Sally's is effectively doing is removing the uniqueness from the trainer's complaint; removing its specificity as an instance of heterosexism and placing it in a generic category of assumptions being made about people who deviate (albeit only slightly) from the norm. She places the genuine grievance a woman whose partner is sterile has (i.e., nurses should take such things into account) on a par with being heterosexist. Brickell (2001: 233) makes the same point 'the liberal ground *itself* aids and abets [heterosexual dominance] through its failure to recognize the institutionalization of heterosexuality'. Making assumptions about fertility are not the same as being heterosexist - being heterosexist is different, a particular form of prejudice that needs to be addressed as such. Sally places lesbians' difficulties with heterosexist nurses into a category with the complaints of sterile heterosexuals, which creates a liberal (we're all unique, we're all individuals) melting pot that detracts from the specificity of lesbian and gay oppression and the organisation of society around the privileging of heterosexuality. Therefore, according to Sally, if the trainer's

experience counts as an instance of ‘prejudice’ then the assumption made about her as a heterosexual (i.e., if she is not using contraception she must be attempting to conceive) *also* constitutes ‘prejudice’.

A similar argument was raised in relation to the privileges and rights accorded to married heterosexuals. When trainers discussed explaining to group participants how lesbians and gay men are actively excluded from such privileges, by virtue of not being able to legally marry, often unmarried or cohabiting heterosexuals complained that they are also discriminated against. This phenomena was explained by a trainer in interview:

Extract 3

Dee: You’ll always get somebody saying “well it’s the same for straight people isn’t it. I’m not married and if my partner dies she won’t get my pension” and actually, despite what I think about marriage, people still have the choice to do it. You might not want to do it, you might be politically opposed to it, but you have the choice legally to go and do it and then have all the privileges and rights that go with it. So I think people use that as a cop out, when you’re going through some of this stuff you can see people in the group quite often who are clearly unmarried thinking, “well this isn’t fair I’m oppressed as an unmarried person”.

In extract 3 Dee provides an account of unmarried heterosexuals within anti-heterosexism training who ‘cop out’ of addressing their heterosexism by aligning their relationships with lesbian and gay couples, in order to distance themselves from the social privileges and statuses accorded married heterosexuals. Dee uses active voicing (Wooffitt, 1992) in this account to lend weight and authenticity to the depiction of the ‘oppressed’ unmarried heterosexual, and to depict the trainee’s complaint as part of a scripted general category of ‘the sorts of things heterosexuals say in training’. Although this account of ‘prejudice against the heterosexual’ is relayed in a form once removed from the actual instance of it in situ, disavowals of the oppression of lesbians and gay men are available in popular culture (which illustrates the cultural prevalence of these forms of heterosexism), for instance in the television series *This Life*. Warren (a solicitor) is talking to a client who want to divorce his wife on the grounds of adultery, because his wife has been having sex with another woman and Warren says

‘I’m afraid under the law only a heterosexual act of penetration constitutes adultery’. The client then angrily replies, ‘my God! This bloody country’s got it all wrong, I mean they’ve got more rights than we have’. This is a more emotive example, but we can see how a reversal of the receiver of prejudice is heterosexist when in reference to a fundamentally heterosexist norm.

2) Non-Heterosexuality as Deficit

This form of heterosexism was manifest in the devaluing of lesbian and gay sexualities by comparison to, or rendering them analogous with, some form of deficit, vice or abnormality. Extract one is taken from LGAT 7, a full day’s training with residential social workers at a point in the course where they have been asked by the trainers to discuss in small groups how young people deal with their sexuality:

Extract 4

Ron: How would you feel if like your son come out or daughter?

John: I would love them exactly the same

Ron: You’d still love them the same?

John: Course you would

Angela: They’re your flesh and blood aren’t they

John: Somebody was talking to me the other day about that I think it was Helen, because Vikki’s husband’s really, homophobic and he’s going on about ‘if your son was in a motorbike accident and lost his leg would you still love him the same’ course you would. What’s the difference if he comes out and he says he’s gay, and would you still love him the same, course you would

In this extract there is, ostensibly, a lot of positive talk about lesbians and gay men. John says ‘I would love them exactly the same’, Angela says ‘they’re your own flesh and blood’ and then John reiterates loving a gay son the same. In this extract (again) difference is de-emphasised, the focus being on *exactly* the same, which minimises lesbian and gay sexuality as an identity issue with any unique aspects to it. Notice also that John shifts from the personal ‘I’ would love him the same to ‘you’ would love him the same. This appeals to (and stresses) the normative, general position of (unspecified) people at large, that having a lesbian or gay child would not be difficult,

or effect how parents would feel about their child. Within a liberal, individualised framework it could be argued that John's talk is not heterosexist. However, the heterosexism here is embedded in the analogy which he draws on (again one step removed as he is ventriloquising 'Vikki's husband') between lesbian or gay sexualities and having lost a leg. This comparison rests on the implicit notion of the whole person being like the heterosexual; complete, fully functioning and 'normal'. Whereas coming out as lesbian or gay is like a loss or lack, being disabled or not now a fully functioning human being.

A more direct example of drawing a deficit or deviance analogy with lesbian or gay sexualities is present in extract four (below). This excerpt is taken from a post-training interview with Janine. She is reflecting on changing her son's homophobic views, by encouraging him to see lesbians and gay men as 'individuals'.

Extract 5

Janine: So I actually got him [her son] to change his opinion (yeah²) from saying "it's a total no no" (mm) to actually you know everybody's an individual and they all belong to families, and they're loved by different people (yeah) you know. Actually he admitted that if it was one of his own family that he would, yes it would be acceptable, he wouldn't think any different of them (yeah) and so that was a good point for me t- to-

EP: To use with your son

Janine: Yeah [...] I always think as well you know when [they] perhaps find a murderer on television or whatever (mm) and so this is the man, everybody thinks "hang him" [...] but at the end of the day this man or woman or murderer is somebody else's son or daughter (mm) you know, and you'd probably still love them, and go and visit them in prison, and have a relationship with them (yeah) you know, it does make you realize that people are individuals I think.

Here Janine uses (again) an individualized argument to enable her son to not think 'any different of them [lesbians and gay men]', which is premised on a liberal notion which 'puts the person first' and negates the salience of social categories. The liberalism in her account, however, becomes more objectionable when she applies the

² Interviewer's minimal responses, such as 'mm' and 'yeah', are in brackets.

same principle to a murderer. She previously remarks that her son's view of lesbians and gay men involves 'lining 'em all up against the wall with a firing squad', strongly suggesting that lesbians and gay men are deviant (perhaps even criminal) and are deserving of punishment and indeed death. By comparing understanding lesbian and gay men as 'individuals' with empathising with the plight of murderers which 'does make you realise that people are individuals' there is a clear (yet subtle) comparison made between lesbians and gay men and murderers. Her position is that you should accept lesbians, gay men and murderers despite what they are or what they have done and 'still love' the person underneath, as though this is separate to their identities.

The separation of the 'individual' from the category lesbian or gay is reminiscent of 'love the sinner, hate the sin' religious tolerance arguments about homosexuality. This is also embedded in liberal "acceptance" accounts of responses to coming out. Within coming out anthologies lesbians report similar reactions from parents after their disclosure of lesbianism. For instance, Terri commented that her mother: 'did not understand it [lesbianism], but said I would always be her daughter, *no matter what*' (Penelope & Wolfe, 1989: 231, my emphasis). Another lesbian, Frances, reported that her father said 'it was "none of his business" and I was *still* his favourite daughter' (National Lesbian and Gay Survey, 1992: 26, my emphasis). Owens (1998: 203) reports that a 'positive' parental reaction would contain within it a statement such as, 'I will always love you, *no matter what you are*', which again implies that being lesbian or gay is an awful thing to be. There are published examples of this type of argument 'rooted in an ideologically liberal and supposedly nondiscriminatory view' (Ristock, 1997: 291). For example in Ristock's study of shelters for battered women, service providers made comments such as: 'if they [lesbians] came in they would be treated the same as everyone else' (p. 291). This account of lesbian and gay sexuality is highly individualised, focusing on specific individual's rather than social groups. A clinical psychologist trainee in LGAT2 made this very point when she said: 'I think there's a real danger in getting really bogged down by, and loosing sight of the fact that gay, straight, Asian, Black, you know they're still a person'. Within such an individualistic, liberal view of sexuality, social categories are subsumed by the need to see an individual (in this case a client) as 'a person'. The use of the word 'still' suggests this is despite their social group(s) rather than as well as it, as though a social

category can be stripped away to reveal the ‘true’ person, and an individual’s category membership is actually superfluous.

A third example of ‘non-heterosexuality as deficit’ is taken from a focus group discussion where undergraduate psychology students are discussing children being raised in lesbian and gay families. This extract is different to the previous two as Vivian is called to account for her analogy between a gay parent and an alcoholic father.

Extract 6³

Vivian: I suppose it’s just the same as like (.) bringing up a child where (.) I don’t know where (.) your father’s an alcoholic or something you accommodate to it you get used to it

Jan: Mm what do you mean (.) being in a gay family is the same as having a dad that’s an alcoholic

Vivian: No as if like (.) people see that as different don’t they bringing up a gay pers- uh two gays bringing up a child so it- a lot of people see a gay couple as being wrong an a lot of people see a father who’s an alcoholic being wrong but no matter what that- the people in that family sti- learn to (.) grow up in that situation and learn that it isn’t wrong it’s just

Jan: Just different

Vivian: It’s just the way it is it doesn’t matter there’s always going to be something wrong in everyone’s family but you you teach yourself that it’s not wrong it’s just different

In this extract Vivian’s comparison between a lesbian or gay parent and an alcoholic father is challenged by Jan, who appears to be objecting to the negative connotations cast on lesbians and gay men. Vivian displays some interactional difficulty at Jan’s comment and her response has hesitations, false starts and pauses. She initially backtracks on her position by invoking society or the general consensus; distancing herself from holding that view and mitigating the accusation of blame – ‘a lot of people see a gay couple as being wrong’. However, she restates her original position through use of ‘there’s always going to be something wrong in everyone’s family’. She could have repudiated her comparison between gay identity and alcoholism and drawn the conclusion prevalent in affirmative lesbian and gay psychological work, that an equation between the two phenomena is, ‘an equation we reject’ (Russell & Bohan,

³ Thanks to Victoria Clarke for providing me with this data.

1999: 164). Conversely, by suggesting the prevalence of ‘wrongness’ within all family structures, she does not undermine the implicit notion that ‘two gays bringing up a child’ is negative. Moreover, she suggests families *per se* are deficient in some way, which leaves the original comparison intact.

3) Refusing Diversity

A third, and related, way in which ‘mundane heterosexism’ is manifest is by refusing to acknowledge diversity and difference between lesbians and gay men and heterosexuals. The argument that by organising separately, lesbians (and gay men) are being divisive and depriving the ‘main’ group of ‘richness’, energy or skills; whilst simultaneously suggesting that the existing group is already ‘inclusive’ is not uncommon. For instance, ‘lavender herring’ was a term used in the 1970s to describe the belief that lesbian issues wrongly diverted attention from the Women’s Liberation Movement (Brody, 1985). These arguments, which function to maintain the heterosexist status quo, were used by the Psychology of Women Section (POWS) in the early 1990s to authenticate their withdrawal of support when psychologists were attempting to found a lesbian (and later gay) psychology section. POWS committee members argued that (at that time) a lesbian section ‘would damage their own section by diverting and dividing women’s energies...and that there was no need for a separate forum devoted to lesbian issues, because lesbian concerns could be ‘included’ within psychology of women generally’ (Kitzinger, 1996: 135; Wilkinson, 1999). In this extract, taken from LGAT2 with clinical psychologists, a woman is using similar devices to account for her decision to vote against the establishment of the lesbian and gay section of the British Psychological Society (BPS).

Extract 7

Joan: I felt that erm by creating a separate group for erm, gay trainee counsellors robbed the general group of the richness of experience and knowledge that we need erm to see people as fellow counsellors. I mean I don’t go round saying ‘hello I’m heterosexual’ so why why should they be marginalised and I just really hope that also by the end of today I can look again at my decision to, vote against that and see whether I’ve changed my view at all or not

Here Joan aligns with a heterosexual norm by framing the need for lesbian and gay psychology to organize separately to mainstream (i.e. heterosexual psychology) as ‘marginalising themselves’ as ‘robbing’, which is an emotive term suggesting the lesbian and gay experience is being wrongfully stolen from, and she does not then say heterosexuals as you might expect, but ‘the general group’ (a nice euphemism for heterosexuals). This is used not to set lesbians or gay men and heterosexuals in opposition to each other, but to imply the general group is already diverse. Joan’s phrase ‘we need to see people as fellow counsellors’ implies that if ‘we’ (i.e., heterosexuals) are prevented from having contact with lesbians and gay men then we will inevitably be prejudiced, suffer, and not be able to see lesbians and gay men *as people* but as stereotypes. It is interesting that Joan invokes the need for contact. The notion of contact is prevalent in lay and psychological theorizing regarding prejudice reduction. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, much social psychological research has been carried out investigating the ‘contact hypothesis’ as a method to reduce anti-lesbian and anti-gay feeling (e.g., Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000; Herek, 1984; Pratarelli & Donaldson, 1997). Joan implies that without contact, if heterosexuals are prejudiced they cannot be held accountable for being prejudiced, because they have been ‘robbed’ of lesbian and gay experience. In other words, heterosexual prejudice would be the fault of lesbians and gay men. Thus the reduction of prejudice, in Joan’s account, is clearly an issue for lesbians and gay men and not heterosexuals’ responsibility. This type of argument has been identified as forming part of traditionalist discourse: ‘discrimination is the fault of the homosexual movement which insists on defending homosexuality and thereby making it visible’ (Smith & Windes, 2000: 84).

Her phrase ‘why should they be marginalised’ is heterosexist, as imbedded within it is ‘willful ignorance’ (Kitzinger, 1996) regarding lesbian and gay issues, and no acknowledgement that ‘general’ ‘mainstream’ psychology actively marginalises, excludes and others lesbian and gay male experiences. Further, separatism, as opposed to the term marginalization, is often seen as a positive empowering move by lesbians (and gay men), in order to organize and develop outside of the confines of an oppressive system. Therefore, her use of the phrase ‘marginalizing themselves’ is privileging heterosexuality and blames the ‘victim’, because in her talk lesbians and

gay men are ghettoizing themselves, without any reference to the value of organising separately for lesbians and gays, and lesbian and gay psychology.

Another example of an account of lesbian and gay sexualities which refuses to acknowledge diversity is clearly present in the extract below, taken from the same discussion as extract one (from LGAT6) between university wardens about room sharing in halls of residence. The previous conversation, you will recall, has focused on the ‘difficulties’ surrounding students of the same sex sharing rooms when they are either lesbian or gay. Jim concludes from this that:

Extract 8

Jim: In our role as sort of counseling, are we er if somebody was to ask us er whether or not they should be open about their gay sexuality should we advise them to not be, cos it sounds to me as though the whole thing would be much easier if nobody admitted it.

Here Jim is suggesting that ‘out’ lesbian and gay identities cause problems for the mainstream and so it is ‘easier’ if heterosexuality is continued to be assumed. One could surmise that not coming out would be ‘easier’ for either the current system of room allocation in halls, or more diffusely for the status quo, which is a heterosexist system. Who precisely it would be ‘easier’ for is deliberately ambiguous, because if Jim were asked to account for this statement (which he is not) then he could conceivably respond in a way which would head off any claims that he himself were heterosexist (for instance, by saying ‘all I meant was the current system is geared up for heterosexuals and it’s easier to change individuals rather than the system’).

Ways Forward: Challenging Mundane Heterosexism

In the data I have discussed nobody directly says that lesbians and gay men are perverted, or unnatural, or sinners, or have no right to be who we are. The manifestations of heterosexism I have analysed in this chapter are thoroughly couched within a liberal framework. There can be no doubt that extreme forms of lesbian and gay oppression, including denial of human rights, anti-lesbian and –gay laws, severe violence and antipathy, are prevalent in contemporary culture (e.g., Herek & Berrill,

1992). Nonetheless, attention should be paid to central (i.e., mundane) forms of oppression against lesbians (and gay men), as well as focusing on the margins of extreme heterosexist behaviours (e.g., queer bashing). Focusing on mundane heterosexism is important because these forms of heterosexism currently blend seamlessly into everyday life, and largely remain unchallenged and unnoticed (by lesbians and gay men, as well as heterosexuals). Generally the heterosexuals in the eight extracts I have analysed deploy, what I called earlier, false equivalence. Sally argued that her experience of health and a lesbian's experience of health care were 'exactly the same'. Jim said that there was 'no difference' between heterosexuals sharing a room and lesbians/gay men sharing a room. John reported that he would 'love them just the same'; and Joan implied there is no difference between saying 'hello I'm heterosexual' and coming out as lesbian or gay. Making a sameness argument in these contexts, I have argued, is part of devaluing lesbian and gay experience and homogenising it within a heterosexual - and by extension heterosexist - framework (Bohan & Russell, 1999). However I agree with Christine Robinson's (1997: 47) view that:

'Whilst it is important to understand the various manifestations of heterosexism, it is equally important to articulate the ways in which heterosexism is actively contested and subverted. Social interaction and institutions are gendered spaces; subsequently, they represent both sites of domination and places of liberation'

There are perhaps two levels for challenging mundane heterosexism: interactional, 'in situ' challenge and broader societal campaigns and activism. In terms of activism against particular language (and the anti-lesbian and -gay sentiment it conveys) there may be value in campaigns such as the Terrence Higgins Trusts "It's prejudice that's queer" posters. These posters invert common statements made regarding lesbians and gay men (for example, 'I can't stand homophobes, especially when they flaunt it' and 'My son is homophobic, I hope it's just a phase') in a way which highlights the prejudice in the original phrases. Within interaction there are common strategies employed by lesbians and gay awareness trainers: one is putting across the argument that lesbians and gay men are different to heterosexuals but equal, which can potentially work to counter the sameness and false equivalence that is embedded in mundane heterosexism. Another strategy used in the training context, which may undermine the individualistic emphasis in mundane heterosexism, is to draw links to

other oppressions such as racism and sexism to illustrate that heterosexism is related to a heteropatriarchal social structure that allows such prejudice to flourish. Although particular arguments may be useful at specific times it is important to note that there is nothing inherently pro-lesbian/gay in such arguments. It is their value when used interactionally which is important and suggesting ‘off the cuff’ responses to specific anti-LGB arguments would not (probably) be useful in practice. For example with regard to the argument stressing similarity between heterosexism and other oppressions Bohan and Russell (1999: 210) have acknowledged that ‘white LGBs’ comparisons between racism and homonegativity typically emphasize similarities and underplay differences between the two prejudices. Dialogue between groups is not likely to occur when only our commonalities are understood’.

As we saw in extract six, direct interactional challenges to heterosexism are not necessarily successful. When Jan remarked upon Vivian’s analogy between gay parents and alcoholic parents she did not then apologise or renounce the comparison, but suggested there was ‘wrong’ in all families. When unmarried heterosexuals suggest they are oppressed (extract 3) Dee remarked she would point out in training that: ‘I don’t think they are oppressed as an unmarried person because they have choices, oppression is something that is done to you that you don’t have any say in.’ Although, it is impossible extrapolate from that data to how that particular strategy would work in practice, it is possible with extract one.

As I discussed earlier, Nekesh said that there was ‘discrimination against the heterosexual’ as lesbian and gay couples could (theoretically at least) share rooms in halls of residence, whereas heterosexual women and men cannot. Initially the trainer responded with ‘do you think realistically men and women are having sex with each other at this university?’ The group laughed when he said this (which suggests that they recognised that not sharing a room does not prohibit heterosexual sex), but the trainer’s response does not directly deal with the putative ‘benefits’ afford lesbians and gay men as they are able to share a room. It is not until nine and a half minutes later and the discussion has moved on that the trainer is able to comment on the heterosexism within Nekesh’s talk. The trainer (Ben) brings the conversation back to the issue:

- MT1: I'm very wary that y'know there are a very few erm cases and very very few examples of law when there are kind of incidental benefits erm to lesbians and gay men. There are very few of those and may be that one y'know the fact that y'know a lesbian couple or a gay couple could share a room or would be allowed to get to share a room on campus may be one of those small incidental benefits y'know. They've absolutely no right to form a legal partnership y'know it's like
- Amy: I know I know
- MT1: Do you what I mean? I'm very wary of over emphasizing a very small incidental benefit at the expense of-
- Nekesh: You could look at it as well they could be gay or lesbians but they are not with each other but they just happen to be lesbians but because nobody they don't want to offend or they might be offended by sharing with somebody who's is not a lesbian then may be they want to share together.

Though some time has elapsed since Nekesh's original comment, the trainer is able to point out the 'very few' 'small incidental benefits' for lesbians and gay men and compare that to having 'absolutely no right to form a legal partnership'. There is some acknowledgement of his argument (Amy says 'I know I know'), but this is rather dismissive. Amy's 'I know I know' (and Nekesh's 'as well') *claim* the knowledge that lesbians and gay men have no legal rights, but does not *show* this knowledge by rewording the trainer's statement - talking themselves about legally endorsed discrimination against lesbians and gay men. In other words, by implying the trainer's point about lack of legal rights is to be taken-for-granted they suggest it is 'old news', and trivialize the institutionalized oppression of lesbians and gay men. The trainer says 'y'know' (dubbed an 'attention-getting device', Fishman, 1998: 256) five times which indicates some "conversational trouble" and an attempt to elicit positive uptake from the group, and still there is no response after the trainer says 'do you know what I mean?', suggesting that the group are not aligning with his position. The trainer alludes to the fact that sharing is 'at the expense of' what might potentially have been 'a lack of basic human rights for lesbians and gay men' (or a similar phrase). At this point though Nekesh interrupts and adds a new point ('as well'), this shifts the conversational topic to lesbians and gay men sharing a room but merely being friends. This example illustrates the interactional difficulty - even when the challenge comes from the trainer who is in a relative position of power and authority within such a group - in attempting to present alternatives to heterosexist arguments.

Often within the training context, immediate and direct challenges to subtle forms of heterosexism are not easily made, because of the local interactional situation. For example in extract seven, Joan's narrative accounting for her decision to vote against the establishment of the lesbian and gay section of the BPS is occasioned by the earlier question from Emma (the trainer) 'any burning issues that you want to throw in at this point?' The group is in the process of constructing a list of topics to discuss later in the training, and therefore the trainer stopping and soliciting discussion about Joan's heterosexist comment would disrupt the 'agenda' and task the group is currently focused on. It would (potentially) have been possible for Emma to use a number of counter-arguments. First, the trainer could have argued for the political importance of separatism in feminism and lesbian feminism. Second, a counter argument could have focused on lesbian and gay psychologists not necessarily being lesbian or gay and the field has (some) heterosexual psychologists working with it. Lesbian and gay psychologists have publicly used this argument, which maximizes inclusiveness, for instance, in the October 1997 proposal for the establishment of this section:

The phrases "lesbian psychologist" and "gay psychologist" mean (in this context) psychologists involved in this type of psychology -just as the terms "social psychologist" or "sports psychologist" refer to psychologists involved in other types of psychology. No implications are intended as to the characteristics of the psychologist himself -or herself: a "lesbian and gay psychologist" can be heterosexual, just as a "social psychologist" can be anti-social, or a "sports psychologist" a couch potato' (Kitzinger et al., 1997, p. 10-11).

In fact, Emma responds to Joan by summarizing the positions, and shifts topic to the current training session: 'so it's an issue of kind of separateness [rather than separatism which has different connotations] or marginalisation versus integration. I suppose that's an issue for this kind of training as well, that one of the worries I have about doing a day on sexual orientation it that it's not integrated into everyone's general teaching'. Another issue is what 'counts' as a successful challenge to subtle heterosexism. What form(s) of interaction would facilitate counter-arguments, and what criteria would enable classification as 'successful' uptake of such arguments. Is affirmation in the form of 'mhm' or 'yes I agree' from a heterosexual group member

to be counted as a successful challenge to heterosexism? It has been noted (from a discourse analytic perspective) that, ‘workshops might well provide participants with a new vocabulary of motives, a new set of identity narratives and so on, and that can be a powerful benefit’ (Wetherell & Potter, 1992: 218). Thus training can be a positive forum for social change.

In conclusion, the analysis in this chapter indicated that the expression of heterosexism is tempered by that fact that ‘in contemporary society, the social norm opposing prejudice is stronger than the norm favoring prejudice’ (Monteith et al., 1996: 267). This means that heterosexism is not boldly stated, but tied to and infused with liberal ideology. I have increased understanding of how the ‘micro inequalities’ of heterosexism are constructed by discussing three ‘types’ of heterosexist talk: ‘prejudice against the heterosexual’; ‘non-heterosexuality as a deficit’; and ‘refusing diversity’. I have contributed to a wider debate about how ‘prejudice’ is manifest in discourse. Also, by exploring, how liberal-based positions are, in fact, heterosexist I have (perhaps) aided trainers and lesbians and gay men in ‘spotting’ such talk as problematic. I am hopeful that oppressed groups have the capacity to: ‘challenge the previously unchallenged assumptions of common-sense, and this challenge itself can substantively affect the nature of common-sense...In consequence, a minority may exert influence, not by changing beliefs, but by forcing the unjustified to become justified’ (Billig, 1987: 219). This, I believe, is *the* major task for LGAT when subtle forms of heterosexism are present. Leets and Giles (1997: 260) found from experimental studies that ‘in-group members evaluated the indirect messages of racism to be more harmful than the out-group members did’. Indirect ‘messages’ of heterosexism are harmful, and so necessitate more (and detailed) consideration of how they are constructed in order to be able to work out successful strategies for undermining them.

Chapter 8

Question Themes in Lesbian and Gay Awareness Training

Question: 'Do lesbians use sex toys?'

Answer: 'Ask any purveyor of sex toys about who buys and uses the various sexual implements available, and you'll find out that all kinds of people, male and female, gay and nongay, old and young, religious and agnostic, use sex toys' (Marcus, 1999: 155)

This chapter and the penultimate Chapter 9 share a common theme: questions. There is an entitlement to ask questions of 'stigmatized' individuals, of those who are unusual or different from the norm. This applies in the case of lesbian and gay sexuality vis à vis heterosexuality. Within both feminist theory and psychology, for instance, 'heterosexuality disappears into the background, leaving lesbianism as the interrogative focus' and the two sexual identities are clearly 'not symmetrical' (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1993: 1, 8). The disparity between how lesbian (and gay sexualities) and heterosexuality are viewed and experienced was thrown into relief when, for a *Feminism & Psychology* Reader (and Special Issue) on the topic of heterosexuality, Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger invited heterosexual feminists to write 1000 words on the topic of how their heterosexuality contributed to their feminist politics. Heterosexual feminists, in general, found that answering the questions often asked of lesbians (and also gay men) such as 'What causes it?', 'Can I change it?', 'How will it affect my children?' profoundly difficult. Questions addressing the cause and impact of lesbianism (and gay male sexuality) are 'among those that virtually every lesbian has pondered at some point in her life' (p. 6). Yet for heterosexuals, responding to these types of questions was 'entirely new', and resulted in comments from women which either suggested they would be unable to answer such questions ('I would be dredging around for something to say'), or that striving for a response would be too arduous ('I'd need to put an icepack on my head and think about nothing else for a couple of weeks'). The editors also commented that they had 'been accused of "oppressing" heterosexuals simply by raising the questions posed in our "Call for Contributions"' (p. 25). This exemplifies the *lack* of entitlement to ask the *same* questions of heterosexuals, as are commonly asked of lesbians and gay men (and *do* form part of the machinery of heterosexism). 'Heterosexuality' is privileged, and

a privileged identity doesn't require justification, explanation, or rationalisation - something acknowledged by some of the heterosexual contributors to the Reader. For instance, remarks such as the 'status of heterosexuality is a safe one' (Beloff, 1993: 39), and 'heterosexuality is associated with privacy' (Lips & Freedman, 1993: 58) show an awareness that heterosexuality is an untouchable identity which could be likened to an impenetrable fortress. In contrast, non-heterosexualities are not conferred the same 'safety' and 'privacy', and lesbians (and gay men) are accustomed to having to think about why we are the way we are, and to answering questions on that basis.

Asking heterosexuals to think about the impact of their heterosexuality *as an* identity category is not normative. The perplexed, hostile or uncomprehending reactions to the *Heterosexuality* Reader, and presence of "reversed" questions in awareness raising materials, such as 'What do you think caused your heterosexuality?', 'Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?', 'The great majority of child molesters are heterosexual (95%). Do you really consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?' (Rochlin, 1992, reproduced in Besner & Spungin, 1995: 33-4; Zuckerman & Simons, 1996: 33) highlight that questioning heterosexuality is *not* normative. The way the heterosexuality-focused questions are introduced in manuals also flags up this issue, they comment that the questions are 'very similar to the questions commonly asked of lesbians and gay men' (Zuckerman & Simons, 1996: 33). Given that questioning homosexuality *is* normative, a case could be argued for lesbians and gay men having an "obligation" to listen to, engage with and answer as best we can, the questions which (often, but not exclusively) heterosexuals raise about lesbian and gay identities and lifestyles. Some (North American) lesbians and gay men have addressed this vicariously by producing educational resources designed with a dual focus, namely, to enable lesbians and gay men to tackle straight peoples' questions (and by extension and association their 'prejudice'), and as an information source for direct use by heterosexuals (e.g., Berzon, 1996; Blumenfeld, 1992). This form of 'self-help' literature is designed to 'bring needed light to a subject that remains clouded by ignorance and destructive myths' (Marcus, 1999: xv). One text in particular is devoted to answering 'all the questions you've ever had about homosexuality but were

afraid to ask’ (‘Is it a Choice?’ Marcus, 1999). The answers to over 300 questions are provided in a form mirroring, the author claims, ‘the broad middle of lesbian and gay life’ (xvi), and are divided into 20 topics including ‘relationships and marriage’, ‘sex’ and ‘politics, activism, and gay and lesbian rights’. The heading capitalised on the back cover reads ‘THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION’ which conveys a clear message – questions are important. LGAT trainer Brian McNaught (1997: 408) reports that his co-trainer always says to the group: ‘let’s agree that the only stupid question is the one we don’t ask’. When I entered the search terms ‘questions and homosexuality’ into internet search engines (i.e., Google, 02.05.02) 176 000 relevant web pages were produced. In a current cultural climate where forums for asking questions about lesbian and gay issues are generally limited, books and electronic sources provide a ‘safe’ opportunity for information to be conveyed and accessed.

However, decontextualised written questions and answers have features that - as I will demonstrate in this Chapter and more fully in Chapter 9 - deviate markedly from how questions *actually* get asked and how they *actually* get answered. This chapter focuses on the role of questions (from participants to trainers) within training. My overarching goal in this chapter is to identify and code questions trainees raise, and to assess the extent to which trainers can be said to be answering such questions ‘successfully’. I extend this focus in Chapter 9 to exploring, in detail, three instances in which trainers ran into serious problems in dealing with questions.

Questions, and trainers’ answers to them, do not constitute a large percent of the time spent on training (around 13 percent of the core data set). In most training sessions, as the training manuals indicate, trainee questions and trainer answers take up only a small part of the session, most of which is focused on structured exercises and ‘managed’ whole group or small group discussions, and the presentation of other material ‘from the front’ (refer to Chapter 4 for further discussion of exercises). Although training manuals emphasise the importance of permitting – and encouraging – questions from participants in training, stressing the need ‘to respond thoroughly to questions’ (Marinoble, 1997: 252), they offer very little guidance about how trainers might do this successfully. In

addition, although several manuals (e.g., Myers & Kardin, 1997; Windibank, 1995) present sample training schedules which explicitly include a formal ‘question and answer’ component, they say nothing about how such a session might be structured, the difficulties trainers might encounter, or how to overcome them. Other manuals provide lists of ‘frequently asked questions’ and (less often) model responses to them (e.g., Besner & Spungin, 1995: 106; Iasenza, 1997: 319-320; Marinoble, 1997: 250-252; McNaught, 1993: 92-116; McNaught, 1997: 402-415; Windibank, 1995: 14-17) and I will discuss these in the context of my own findings.

The training manual literature highlights that trainers should be knowledgeable and competent question answerers; they should be ‘prepared for the controversial nature of discussion and questions that may accompany this presentation’ (Marinoble, 1997: 250). As discussed in Chapter 4, trainers feel that dealing with questions from trainees is one of the most difficult aspects of training, especially for trainers relatively new to the job. One interviewee (Daniel) reported finding training ‘terrifying because I wasn’t used to speaking to people and we didn’t know what the questions would be. You’d get home and think “oh what about when they said this – I should have said that”, and you’d feel that you’d let people down’. Another trainer (Ron) commented that ‘the big thing I always worry about is whether people are going to start asking lots of questions I can’t answer – all kind of theoretical questions and stuff’.

On the other hand, when trainers report that their sessions have gone well, it is their success at dealing with trainees’ questions that is often mentioned, as in the following two instances from different trainers: ‘There were questions and answers, and the questions were good questions, and I’d got all the answers as well – which you don’t always have – so it went off really well’ (Daniel); ‘It just feels great going with the flow, and people ask questions and I, you know, come up with some kind of fluent answer, and yeah, mostly it’s good now’ (Anthony).

Method of Analysis

After reading through the 13 LGAT transcripts in conjunction with the audiotapes, I compiled a list of all the questions participants asked trainers. Participants' talk was treated as 'asking a question' whether or not it took the grammatical form of a question, if, in context, it could reasonably be understood, by the trainer, as performing the *action* of 'questioning'. This meant I included many instances of talk taking the form of a 'statement' where, for example it was a statement about wanting or being interested to know something, or wondering about something, in the trainer's (supposed) area of expertise (e.g., "We wanted to know what a dental dam was"; "I'd be interested to know what sort of issues crop up..."; "I'm wondering whether you tell anybody else [about trainer's same-sex 'marriage']"). Trainers typically treat these declarative statements as questions. Likewise, participants sometimes project that they are going to 'ask a question' (e.g., "What I want to ask is...") such that trainers attend (and respond) to their subsequent talk as 'doing questioning' even when nothing in the grammatical format of a 'question' is ever produced. I also *excluded* some talk which, although it had the grammatical format of a question, was clearly doing something *other* than asking a question. Many utterances which had the format of a tag question (e.g., "he only admitted it after he got caught out didn't he"; "they should know, don't you think, or else it might all go horribly wrong") are not doing the action of 'questioning' but rather softening, via a question format, some other action such as conveying information, or expressing an opinion. (For more detailed consideration of the relationship between grammatical form and social action see Heritage, frth1, frth2, frth3; Clayman, 2001.)

Two forms of analysis were then undertaken: first, a thematic analysis grouped together similar questions into categories and enabled me to assess their distribution across the data set; second, the methods of conversation analysis (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974) were applied to a selection of these questions (and trainers' answers to them) in their sequential context. The conversational analysis was used in order to understand how, in any given situation, these questions arise out of (and reflexively constitute) the ongoing action of training and, in particular, what difficulties

trainers encounter in answering trainees' questions. I now discuss the thematic analysis, and Chapter 9 presents the conversation analysis.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 8.1 (below) indicates that across the 13 LGAT sessions there were a total of 162 questions (ranging from four to 25 questions per session). LGAT 4 and LGAT 9 contained the least number of questions, whilst LGAT 12 contained the greatest number. There is no obvious or systematic reason why there was a wide variation between the number of questions across sessions. The various could be due to manifold factors including variation between different trainers, the style of training, room layout, or characteristics of the group such as the number of trainees or their age. The two sessions with fewest questions were both afternoon courses, with a relatively large number of older trainees, which may have had some bearing on why fewer questions were asked. Questions were extracted, along with sufficient context to make analytic sense of them, and numbered sequentially from LGAT1 question 1 (1Q1, the first question asked in LGAT1) to LGAT15, question 7 (15Q7, the last question asked in LGAT 15).

Table 8.1: Question Distribution in Core Data Set

Session	Total Number Questions (n= 162)	Procedural Questions (n= 45)	Substantive Questions (n= 117)
LGAT1	9	0	9
LGAT2	17	4	13
LGAT3	9	2	7
LGAT4	4	3	1
LGAT5	9	1	8
LGAT6	22	5	17
LGAT7	19	8	11
LGAT9	4	2	2
LGAT11	12	6	6
LGAT12	25	2	23
LGAT13	13	3	10
LGAT14	12	9	3
LGAT15	7	0	7

More than a quarter of the 162 questions collected (n= 45, 28%) were 'procedural' questions related to the ongoing conduct of the training session, and these were excluded

from further analysis. Examples include: “You want us to do the questionnaire again?” (3Q8); “Do you want these back in?” (5Q5); “Do we need more than one?” [piece of flipchart paper] (6Q5); “Do you want me to stand up or sit down?” (7Q8); “Is it alright if I go to the toilet?” (11Q11); “Are we doing it in two groups then?” (13Q12); “Can we put things down for both sexes, or just for people who are bisexual?” (12Q1). These ‘procedural’ questions are part of what produces these training sessions *as* training sessions (in that asking them invests the trainer with the power to define the proper procedures, and displays the participants’ attentiveness to doing ‘correctly’ whatever it is that the trainer requests of them) but they do not directly engage with substantive topics related to lesbian and gay issues.

The remaining 117 questions dealing with substantive issues relevant to lesbian and gay concerns were coded into six categories¹. The questions were coded separately by two coders and any anomalies in categorization were discussed and a small number of questions were recategorised to both coders’ satisfaction. The questions addressing substantive topics were coded into the following categories: (1) General ‘understanding’ questions (31, 27%²); (2) Questions about the trainer’s life, experience, and practices (15, 13%); and (3) Professional practice questions (22, 19%); (4) Questions about lesbian and gay related legislation, policies and procedures (18, 15%); (5) Questions about specific people and projects (19, 16%); and (6) Questions about the meanings, derivations and correct use of terms and symbols (15, 13%).

I will now discuss each of the six categories in turn, both in reference to the content of questions and the implications of these ‘types’ of questions for training, trainers and trainees.

¹ I am not making strong claims for the coding system: as with any method of categorising, the boundaries between categories were sometimes fuzzy, and more detailed analysis (presented in Chapter 9) makes plain some of the problems with coding questions in this manner at all. My aim here is not to provide a typology of the questions asked in what is anyway a non-random sample of LGAT sessions, but rather to indicate something of the range and diversity of these questions as a backdrop against which my more detailed analysis of some of these questions can be understood.

² All percentages are out of 117; they add up to more than 100% because some questions are coded in more than one category.

(1) General ‘Understanding’ Questions (n=31)

The questions in this category are pursuing *understanding* (i.e., the speaker is treating themselves as having an understanding deficit) *rather* than a knowledge deficit (see category 5). This category forms the largest group of substantive questions, and within this category a number of sub-themes were apparent in trainees’ questioning. Readily discernable *topic* areas were questions relating to: ‘causes’, choice and change in sexual orientation (n=7); coming out as lesbian or gay (n=5); heterosexism and oppression (n=5); bisexuality (n=3); HIV/AIDS (n=2); and the percentage of the populous who are lesbian or gay (n=2). Listed in Box 8.1 below are some examples of questions within this category.

Box 8.1: General ‘Understanding’ Questions

- 7Q16 “Do they get violence towards lesbians or mainly towards gay men?”
- 13Q2 “So are we saying then that bisexuals, it’s biologically based or are we saying that it’s a phase or...?”
- 1Q4 “Have you ever met anybody who regrets coming out?”
- 14Q10 “If there is somebody who’s gay or lesbian, you know, is it more likely that they perhaps would go for sort of like the big occasion, like the Christmas party to come out?”
- 12Q17 “Are you saying then that the people that are going to get married and that lot, aren’t you saying that they’re living a lie but don’t realize it til later?”
- 3Q6 “Do you think part of that [homophobia] stems because a lot of people aren’t comfortable with their own sexuality and therefore feel threatened by any variety?”

The questions in this category were relatively evenly spread across nine of the 13 sessions, which points towards the robustness of this category. The term understanding signifies both factual information and an interpretation of ‘the facts’. Understanding is not purely factual. A person asking a question in the pursuit of understanding is conceivably looking for meanings, an interpretative stance, and/or a subjective position on a body of knowledge or set of ‘facts’, rather than merely wanting to be the recipient of information. There is no necessary correspondence between a fact and a particular interpretation of it. This is something that I explore in-depth in Chapter 9, drawing on the

question and response to ‘Where does HIV AIDS come from?’ The discussion between the trainer and trainee following this question highlights that they have very different interpretations of the factual information surrounding the incidence of HIV and its connection (or not) to gay men. In a discussion with the trainer after this session he commented that not only did he have difficulty understanding what the trainee meant by the question, as the trainee ‘didn’t make it clear’ he had also felt that the question could have ‘been slightly homophobic and trying to say “well it’s gay men who started it all”’ (Simon). In addition to this, he reflected on being ‘tired’ of hearing questions about the origins of HIV and AIDS, not wanting to ‘be sort of ambushed with that one’. Unfortunately, I was not able to collect corresponding data from the trainee who raised the question, but (as I explore in Chapter 9) it transpired as the response to the question unfolded that the trainee’s interpretation of ‘the facts’ was that heterosexuals are *equally* –if not more so- at risk of contracting HIV as gay men. The trainer’s position, ‘stem[ing] from the years of working in the HIV field’, as he articulated it in post-training interview was the antithesis of this because: ‘when everyone’s saying “no it’s an equal thing” you know “it’s not just gay people blah blah blah” [...] resources were so diluted and diverted away from gay men’s work [...] and people were scared of actually saying that statement “yeah it is gay men” but I won’t engage in blame’ (Simon). Thus, communicating *an interpretation* of a particular set of facts can be difficult if the trainer and trainee have opposite and competing perspectives on a topic.

Of all the questions in the data, these most closely resembled the ‘sample questions’ produced in the training manuals and they covered the range of topics typically identified by such manuals as characteristic of trainees’ questions (see, for example, Besner & Spungin, 1995: 106; McNaught, 1993: xiv; Iasenaz, 1997: 319; Windibank, 1995: 14-17). The manuals include, for example, questions about coming out issues, and the origins and effects of prejudice, all of which were common in the data. And, just as the manuals’ sample questions include queries related to prejudice and discrimination (e.g., ‘What kinds of prejudicial experiences do they encounter?’, Besner & Spungin, 1995: 106), so too my data includes general questions addressing these issues: e.g., 3Q6. Other recurrent topics covered in my data, all of which also feature in the training manuals,

include bisexuality, the percentage of lesbians and gay men in the population, paedophilia and child abuse, same-sex ‘marriage’ and parenting, and HIV/AIDS and safer sex.

There are, however, substantial points of divergence between the manual questions and ‘real’ questions in their *form* (which I explore more fully in Chapter 9). There are some interesting differences, for example, between questions 1Q4 and 14Q10 (Box 1), in comparison to the format and content of topically similar questions in manuals. Referring back to Box 1, 1Q4 addresses the ‘regret’ a person might feel after coming out, and 14Q10 asks whether a person is more likely to come out at a large gathering with work colleagues. The wording of these actual questions contrasts with the question, for instance, provided by Iasenza (1997: 319), ‘Why do gay people have to flaunt their sexuality (by coming out)?’ This example clearly displays disapproval on the part of the “speaker” regarding coming out through use of the term ‘flaunt’, which connotes an ostentatious display of lesbianism or gay male sexuality. Although, in the LGAT data trainees hinted at negativity towards lesbians and gay men, it was generally embedded within the question in more subtle and complex ways (see below, and Chapter 9). The manual question is blunt, direct and not geared towards the knowledge-base from which the trainer would respond. In other words, although 1Q4 is also direct it is a ‘have’ rather than a ‘why’ question, and asks the trainer to draw on his *own* experience. The ‘flaunting’ question reveals more about the speaker’s views about lesbians and gay men, and though presented in the grammatical form of a question could, in the local context, be equally interpreted by a hearer as a statement of opinion or a value judgement. The author, in this instance, provides no model response to this question/comment.

McNaught (1993: 111) does, however, provide appropriate and inappropriate responses to a question on this topic: ‘How do I help someone tell me that he or she is gay? And what do I say when I’m told?’ (McNaught, 1993: 109). There is a practicable slant to this question, as there is to 14Q10. Both questions address the applied nature of coming out: the former considers the heterosexual individual as a vehicle for coming out; the latter addresses the optimum conditions for coming out in the wider social context. The real

question is far more tentative than the model – containing hedging and softened by the use of ‘perhaps’. Consider McNaught’s (1993: 111) sample responses. Appropriate responses include ‘Thank you for telling me. I’m honored that you felt you could trust me...’ and ‘Is there an important person in your life? Yes? Well, I want to meet them!’. Inappropriate responses which he describes as neither ‘helpful nor friendly’ are listed as ‘Oh, no. Not you!’, ‘I don’t think it’s relevant’ and ‘I’ll pray for you’.

Though the sentiment conveyed by the modeled appropriate responses is honourable, it is hard to envisage an interactional context where a response would (or could) be communicated in quite the way McNaught indicates. In practice, people design questions and answers with great care and attentiveness (e.g., to possible imputations of ignorance or prejudice) and their questions often carry a heavy freight which goes well beyond simply the search for ‘information’. Questions, as they actually get asked, are not requests for disembodied information, but they come out of a particular interactional context. They are embedded within, and produced by, the flow of talk that they form part of, and are inextricably tied to. The *same* question, therefore, can be doing different things in different sequential contexts, and as such demands a different *answer*. This is where the simulated questions and their respective answers that are presented in training guidelines fall flat and prove inadequate, by virtue of them being detached from the context that they are (or were) produced in. This observation forms part of a more general pattern of research documenting the difficulties of applying a disembodied message to the actual circumstances where its use is advocated. The simplistic message ‘just say no’ recommended for use by young women refusing (hetero)sex is one such example of how refusal skills and assertiveness training programmes provide an approach which is *in practice* untenable for young women to adopt (Kitzinger & Frith, 1999). Kitzinger and Frith’s research comparing this refusal skills training approach with how young women talk about refusing sex in focus groups indicates that ‘refusals are complex and finely organized conversation interactions, and are not appropriately summarized by the advice to ‘just say no’ (p. 294). Moreover, their analysis suggested ‘that young women’s concerns about appropriate refusal technique are fairly sophisticated compared with the crass advice to “just say no”’, and that date rape and refusal skills programmes are

‘prescribing behaviour which violates basic cultural norms and social etiquette’ (p. 305). In a similar fashion, the example questions and answers provided in manuals, though they are provided as a model for trainers, do not map sufficiently onto how questions actually get asked and get answered in training because they are decontextualised and devoid of the subtleties that characterise talk-in-interaction. (I explore more fully in Chapter 9 how questions are constructed in their local contexts.)

These criticisms of ‘potted’ manual questions are raised not to elide the *use* and place of these guides. I am not suggesting that the questions and answers provided in manuals are wrong or unacceptable, simply that they are *different* from questions asked in practice and do not map onto the form and complexity of the real questions in my data set. For a heterosexual wondering how to respond to a co-worker’s recent coming out, having unambiguous guidelines in a written form of what to say, or not to say, would nodoubt provide a useful template, or gist formulation upon which to base a response. Likewise, because of the similarity of these questions to those presented in manuals, manuals *could* be used to shape trainers’ responses to questions asking for more understanding about lesbian and gay issues.

(2) Questions about the Trainer’s Life, Experience, and Practices (n=15)

Thirteen percent of the questions related to the trainers’ life, experience, and practice. A flavour of these personal questions is presented in Box 8.2.

Box 8.2: Personal Questions

2Q13 “What would you do if a client asks you directly [what your sexuality is]?”

9Q2 “When you came and introduced yourself, you said ‘and I’m a gay man’ Is that a process you have to go through constantly?”

12Q5 “What area do you live in?”

13Q6 “How did you handle that one?” [this question is asking the trainer to tell the group what she did when a man asked her to kiss her partner in front of him]

Chapter 5 highlighted that personal questions are ones which trainers find problematic. In the LGAT data, personal questions were asked of the trainers in only four of the 13 groups (LGATs 2, 9, 12 and 13). Question 12Q5 ‘What area do you live in?’ is a good candidate to illustrate the problematic nature of personal questions, consider the trainer’s reply:

- MT4 (Simon): I I I have to consciously make those decisions I have to consciously make decisions about who I come out to
- Karl: What area do you live in.
- MT4: Sorry?
- Karl: What area do you live in.
- MT4: Nottingham city centre.
- Karl: What Victoria flats? Or (0.2)
- MT4: No. St. Ann’s.
- Karl: Ohh right.
- ? ((laughter))
- Karl: I j- I’m from Nott[ingh’m.]
- MT4: [Keep] ing it real.
- Group: ((laughter))
- MT4: Reclaiming the ghetto.
- Karl: Yeah.
- MT4: Um (0.5) Yeah and-and what I’m s- s- am trying to say is like the overt (.) homophobia ((continues))

In this short exchange the trainer attempts to avoid unambiguously answering the question and revealing to the group precisely where he lives, but he is pressed by the trainee into doing so. He then moves the discussion onto another topic which suggests that he interpreted the question as a bothersome interruption, rather than a valid topic. In interview the trainer discussed ‘remember[ing] that bit [...] because it’s personal, and he’s asking me where I live [...] When someone asks you that directly “so where do you live” it’s like almost like “well do you want my address so you can come around and throw a brick threw my window” or whatever you know’. The Victoria flats are locally referred to as ‘fairy towers’ and the trainer discussed objecting to the trainee’s assumption that, as a gay man, he would inevitably live ‘in fairy towers, cos that’s where gay men belong’, he felt that his curt response was as a result of feeling ‘somewhat pissed off’ because ““that’s none of your business””. The trainer commented that he

‘wouldn’t sit in a training session and ask the trainer where they lived’, bolstering his perspective that, although he answered the question, he viewed it as inappropriate.

Personal questions, as trainers discussed in Chapter 5, can take trainers out of the role of ‘trainer’ and position them as simply lesbians and gay men – members of a commonly derided group – a situation described emotively by trainers themselves as being like ‘exhibits’ (Katie) or animals ‘in a zoo’ (Simon). Trainers found personal questions problematic: they could narrate, in vivid detail, the circumstances surrounding their receipt of a personal question, and talk *about* personal questions formed a significant part of their interview talk. Trainers constructed their interview talk in ways which represented personal questions as something which ‘grab[bed]’ at them, as something that is difficult to preempt, avoid, or control. Yet, the distribution of these questions in the core data set suggested that personal questions were *not*, in fact, a normative or widespread element of training. This incongruence between the *accounts* of practice and *practice itself* can be explained by examining the local contexts of LGAT. In other words, for personal questions to occur in training there needs to be conditions which signal to trainees they are permissible. These necessary conditions are contingent on (broadly speaking) a) the trainer; b) the trainee(s); and/or c) the preceding interaction between trainer and trainees.

In LGAT2, the initial questions are voiced by trainees who are themselves lesbian or bisexual. In the other three sessions the trainer talks about her/his personal experiences *prior to* a personal question being asked. I will expand on this. In LGAT2, the questions are about whether, and how, the trainer (a clinical psychologist) comes out to her clients. At the outset, the trainer introduced herself to the group both as a therapist (‘I work therapeutically in a person-centered way’) and as a lesbian (‘I kind of come as- with my experience as a lesbian’)³. So these personal questions are built off what she has set herself up to be. The trainer, flagging up her insider status, and thus experiential

³ Additionally, her male co-trainer provides a more lengthy account of the development of his own sexuality, beginning with: “I was somebody who from probably about the age of sort of 16 or 17 identified themselves as as gay and then went through a what several years kind of happily adopting that label”. He continues for a further 10 lines describing how he has subsequently rejected labelling his sexuality.

knowledge, provides a partial legitimisation for trainees' subsequent personal questions. However, their questions are also directly relevant to their professional experience here, as clinical psychologists themselves (and three of whom are lesbian or bisexual). The first questioner ('What would you do if the client asks you directly?') is himself bisexual but not 'out' so it is directly relevant to his own clinical practice. The second ('Do you correct them if they've made a mistake?') is a lesbian – and hence it is also directly applicable to her clinical practice. In LGAT9 the questioner is building the question off the trainer's self-introduction. He "sets himself up" for the question (9Q2) – as the questioner ventriloquises in the question construction – he says of himself 'and I'm a gay man'. So, in this instance, the questioner is directly using the trainer's acknowledgment of his gay identity (which is construed by the questioner as personal information) as a justification for her question.

In LGAT12, the personal question about where the (male) trainer lives (12Q5) is preceded by other talk about locality from a different trainee than the (male) trainer. Initially, the different trainee talks about her experience of living in '*a small community*' and suffering harassment because 'one of my very best friends was gay'. She recounts that the result was that 'it actually stopped us going to the *local pub*' and 'it made him terrified to go out'. We can observe the references to her specific locality, and also the strength of the emotional reaction and resultant curtailing of "ordinary" behaviour. This stands in contrast to the trainer's talk which follows on from her story: 'I agree I mean erm I mean certainly for myself I have to make choices about where I go out erm which routes I take through the city...' (Simon). The trainer refers to his own experience, but does so in general terms. He *has* to 'make choices' about routes, but these remain unspecified. He elides mentioning the form the implied hostility might take, which again sharply contrasts with the 'anonymous letter' and particular context the previous trainee describes. The generality of the trainer's claim, in contrast with the distinctiveness of the participant's story provides a rationale for 'what area do you live in?' The trainer extends the personal thread that is unfolding and has signaled that personal material is appropriate ('certainly for myself'), but by excluding *context* he (presumably) provides the warrant for the trainee for personal questioning. In LGAT13, the trainer, prior to the start of the

training session, had an informal ‘chat’ with the small group of police officers, during which she revealed information about her partner. In the session itself, she has told a personal anecdote to illustrate the operation of lesbian and gay oppression (‘just before Christmas I went to - as I say my partner is a prison officer- and we went to a prison officers’ Christmas do...’). The personal questions derive from that.

Thus, this pattern of events suggests that trainees do *not* ask personal questions unless trainers indicate, by actually revealing personal information, that they are willing to use their personal experiences in the interests of training. In LGAT 2 and 9, trainers mentioning their sexuality (as a partial justification for their ‘authority’ as trainers), is construed as license for personal questioning. In LGAT 12 and – even more so – in LGAT 13, the trainers *do* volunteer further personal anecdotes and information, and participants then treat the trainer’s personal life as a legitimate topic of questioning.

Pedagogically, trainers are aiming to generalise from personal information, and merely use themselves as exemplars of a widespread pattern. If trainers want to avoid subsequent questions they could either: a) simplify or make absolutely intelligible the point trainees should take away from the information/story; b) provide enough surrounding context to render clarificatory questions unnecessary, i.e., render questions such as ‘what area do you live in?’ redundant; or c) employ the ‘distancing’ strategy discussed by one trainer of ‘us[ing] anecdotes about ourselves but just pretend[ing] they’re about somebody else’ (Dee). The data suggests that, creating (or not) the conditions from which personal questions arise is an issue trainers should give serious thought to. Especially as my analysis of personal questions in training does indicate that this is something that trainers do have *control* over and that they can actively manage.

(3) Professional Practice Questions (n = 22)

Nineteen percent of trainees’ questions related directly to their professional practice and how they could manage lesbian and gay issues in the workplace. Chapter 6 highlighted that trainees wanted more information that they could apply in their working settings, and

one in five of the questions they asked trainers were directly related to them trying to get this information. Box 8.3 provides some example questions typical of this category.

Box 8.3: Professional Practice Questions

- 2Q1 “Mine’s quite a specific question that I was discussing last week – there was a case study on this. That a client’s issues about sexuality were quite confused with the fact that they’d had abuse, and there was some issues of sort of dislike of the opposite sex because of the abuse they’d had. But separate to that was also I think some separate issue – It wasn’t actually my client, but. I’m a bit confused about that and how you would deal with that, and perhaps somebody might think they were homosexual because they’d had a very bad early abuse experience, but might- you know, might not be in one sense, and how to sort some of those things out.”
- 6Q16 “So are we, in our sort of role of counselling, are we. If somebody was to ask us whether or not they should be open about their gay sexuality, should we advise them to not be?”
- 12Q22 “What are we to do then if a young person in our youth club comes out to you as the leader but doesn’t want to discuss it in the youth club at all?”

Question 2Q1 (above) provides another useful contrastive case with similar questions in manuals. This question about the ‘cause’ of homosexuality is both lengthy and convoluted, but again, the manuals’ questions on this topic, do not read as though spoken by real people. When training manuals report questions about the ‘cause’ of homosexuality – in particular, whether people are ‘born’ that way, ‘choose’ to become gay, or are ‘made that way’ by negative experiences with the opposite sex, these questions are crisp and clear: “Is homosexuality a choice?” (Besner & Spungin, 1995: 106), “Do people become gay (especially lesbians) because they have been rejected or hurt by the other sex?” (Iasenza, 1997: 319) or “I bet most of them were abused as kids” (Windibank, 1995: 16).

The questions in this category were disproportionately located in LGAT2. Eleven of the 13 questions raised by trainees in LGAT2 are directly related to their professional experience. The trainers in this group (often) handled the trainees’ questions on this topic

differently to the other sessions in the core data set. The female trainer solicited ‘issues’ (often in the form of questions) for discussion from the group, whilst her male colleague wrote the headings on flip-chart paper for later discussion. Therefore, the ‘questions’ initially raised about professional practice by trainees were not (generally) immediately answered *by trainers* but formed topics for later discussion between trainees in small groups (also see this chapter’s summary and conclusion). Trainees joined groups which they were most interested in, and talked about the topics of ‘disclosure’ of sexuality in therapy, and unconditional positive regard and prejudices, whilst the two trainers joined one trainee who had raised the question of homosexuality and child sexual abuse (2Q1), because none of the other trainees wanted to discuss that topic. This group is unusual in that the trainers are from the same profession as their trainees – they are all clinical psychologists.

When the trainer was not from the same occupational group as the trainees, questions within this category were unusual. The trainer not having an insider status, and knowledge about specific working practice, precludes the asking of these types of questions. The two questions which occurred outside of LGAT2 (6Q16 and 12Q22) resulted in responses from the respective trainers which did not directly engage with the distinctive working *context* within which the questioners were operating (being a warden of a university hall of residence, and a youth worker, respectively). Interestingly, the trainer’s response to 6Q16 is very general. He makes the generic liberal comment that ‘it’s a matter of choice’ and then continues by extrapolating from the question, based on his generalized ‘expert’ knowledge: ‘generally speaking I think that people will tell you about their sexuality if they feel they are safe’. In response to 12Q22, the trainer circumvents providing any concrete advice –either in general, or specifically – by remarking ‘thank you, you’ve just described our case scenario’. He, therefore, closes down any conversation on the topic of sexuality and confidentiality within a youth work setting, at the point where a trainee is directly *asking* for it⁴. He remains committed to non-engagement with the question/topic when a different trainee comments: ‘you’re just

⁴ It is of note that this question arises during an exercise where the group has been asked to generate ways they can enable young people to come out to them as youth workers. Thus the question is tangential and ‘uninvited’, yet relevant given they have been asked to think about their working practice.

saying you'll not go into it now'. The trainer retorts 'that's right', which prompts laughter from the group, and his co-trainer then changes the subject. Thus, we can see that not only does trainer-trainee occupation variation minimize the production of professional practice questions; but additionally, trainer responses to them do not always engage with the exact substance of the question. This relates to one of the findings I discussed in Chapter 6; namely the frustration that (some) trainees reported when they felt that their need for concrete advice about how to handle LGB issues in the workplace had not been adequately addressed by trainers. Trainees often remarked that the information they had been provided with was too vague, or it wasn't specifically tied to *their* workplace. Interestingly, when some trainees were "allowed" to ask a stream of questions to trainers and trainers both engaged with the topic raised and answered all of them in succession (as in LGAT6) this was characterised as the trainers giving the group 'air-time' to 'prevaricate' by one interviewee who attended the session (Tom).

Some training books recommend that the trainer *should* have the same occupation as the trainees (Stewart, 1999). My data suggests that similarity in occupational background provides a setting for practice related questions- trainees are more likely to ask them and trainers are more likely to answer. Trainers' knowledge about trainees particular working practices is pertinent for them. Recall that trainees also expressed, in post-training interview, (see Chapter 6) the hope (and disappointment) that training would have direct implications for their practice. Trainees clearly take this seriously and are asking the kinds of questions, in training, that they think will improve the likelihood of their gaining knowledge they can use in their professional worlds. The presence of these questions indicates that trainees are looking for useful knowledge that might make a difference to their work (e.g., in terms of referrals, working with particular client groups whether older adults, people with learning disabilities or youth groups, improving lesbian and gay visibility in the workplace). However, given the paucity of training available in the UK at present, always matching the occupation of trainer and group is clearly not possible, and some difficulties do emerge as a consequence.

(4) Legislation, Policy and Procedure Questions (n =18)

Eighteen of the questions addressed legislation governing lesbian and gay issues, and resultant policies and procedures. These questions were spread across 6 of the sessions. Box 8.4 provides some examples.

Box 8.4: Legislation, Policy and Procedure Questions

- 5Q6 “You know you were saying earlier about the pension scheme – is that the same for living together who are heterosexual?”
- 7Q9 “Is that right you can be sacked in the army?”
- 12Q1 “Is it [Section 28] part of the Education Act?”
- 12Q11 “Is there a minimum age [of consent] for lesbians?”
- 14Q6 “Isn’t that [protection against discrimination against lesbians and gay men in employment] in the Human Rights Act either?”

From a training perspective, the most salient aspect of these questions is that their presence indicates that trainees are *unaware* of the existence of the multiple forms of structural, legal, procedural and policy discrimination against lesbians and gay men. For instance, there were questions about discrimination in life insurance cover (3Q7, 3Q9); discrimination in employment (7Q9, 7Q10, 14Q6); and discrimination in parenting rights (14Q8, 14Q9).

Some of these questions and the trainees’ responses to them strongly highlight that they do not realize that lesbians and gay men constitute an oppressed group. For example, prior to question 14Q9 (‘And they [the court] got away with that?’) the trainer has been describing a situation whereby a gay man was restricted, via a court order, from cuddling his children and taking them to Gay Pride marches. This anecdote prompts the incredulous question, to which the trainer responds ‘yeah’. The trainee then says in a horrified tone ‘that’s scandalous!’. Responses such as this were quite common in the training data. Evidently, (some) trainees expressed genuine surprise and shock that injustice exists towards lesbians and gay men in structural and institutionalised forms. However, another -more prevalent and less positive- reaction was evident in this type of question. This was manifest in the form of minimizing or otherwise dismissing the discrimination lesbians and gay men experience due to (lack of) legislation, and being

excluded from policy. This reaction could be explained by the new information provided by the trainers disrupting their liberal sense that we live in a society in which inequalities have been pretty much removed. So by minimizing or downplaying the contrary information provided by the trainer, trainees may be attempting to reinstate or leave uncompromised their liberal equilibrium. One example, provided in 5Q6, is the comparison with unmarried heterosexuals, suggesting that the law is not *really* discriminating against lesbians and gay men in particular. Further, trainees engage in victim blaming (i.e., if lesbians and gay men are discriminated against it's our own fault for coming out or for not coming out etc, see also Section "Did you ask for a double bed?" in Chapter 9).

Clearly, then, an important part of LGAT must be communicating facts about how lesbians and gay men are oppressed. In training, there are a number of common ways 'hard facts' (Trainer interview: Dee) are presented: 1) as either anecdotal stories, or 'slipped' into the flow of the trainers' talk to the group; 2) information about the trainer's personal experience of oppression; or 3) in more structured/didactic formats. In LGAT13 and 14 an exercise was used which compared various activities heterosexuals and lesbians and gay men do. The task involved reading through a number of activities (for example, holding hands in public, or donating blood) and discussing, as a group, whether they were legal and socially acceptable for both groups. The task aimed to highlight the discrepancies between how the law treats heterosexuals and homosexuals, and how the *same* behaviours are not socially sanctioned when lesbians and gay men engage in them (e.g., having sex in a hotel room). In LGAT2, a 'guided visualization' was read out to the group, which inverted the present heterosexual world and talked about a society in which LGB people were the majority and heterosexuals were an oppressed, marginalised group. These three methods of communicating factual information about structural inequalities lesbians and gay men currently face have relative strengths and weaknesses, neither approach was either wholly effective nor thoroughly ineffective. The efficacy of different strategies is, in part, dependent on trainees' own perspectives about lesbian and gay issues. In other words, highlighting discrimination in legislation and policy is likely to be ineffective if the recipient voices arguments such as 'gays shouldn't serve in the military'

or ‘homosexuals shouldn’t be teachers’ - evidence of societal oppression would merely provide validation for their stance. However, the majority of LGAT trainees wish to present a liberal and ‘enlightened’ position, so the question becomes how do you persuade liberal people that we *are* structurally oppressed. I will now consider the merits and problems of these approaches.

One difficulty with anecdotal ‘stories’ and one-off facts (which also applies to trainers’ experiences) is that they can easily be dismissed by group members as unique and localized to that particular case. Trainees can be resistant to generalising from that instance, and may attribute the discrimination to aspects of the individual or situation rather than to general cultural factors. Facts, such as people can currently be sacked in the UK for being lesbian or gay (LGAT 7), interjected into the flow of training without background context or detailed explanation, can also be vulnerable to being dismissed or not being believed. Thus the difficulty here is the inability to communicate *pervasiveness* of legislative disparity. An important strength, though, is that the link between social structures and individual experience is made transparent. Providing “human interest” can accentuate that structural inequalities *actually* impact on, and have consequences for, LGB lives. These pros and cons also apply to trainers recounting a personal experience of legislative/policy discrimination, but perhaps there is a higher risk that trainees might see the example as idiosyncratic and not indicative of a wider pattern of LGB experience. Nevertheless, structural oppression conveyed at the level of the individual can make its existence more ‘real’ to trainees. The guided visualization provided in LGAT2 was met by silence from the group. Silence is difficult to interpret, but plausibly it could indicate that the trainees were either shocked or otherwise ‘moved’ by the story, or found lesbian and gay hegemony incomprehensible. The ‘legally and socially acceptable’ exercise may be a less threatening way of conveying the disparities between heterosexuals and lesbians and gay men. Its use generated discussion in the groups and could be successful in communicating the differential application of law and policy. For instance, in LGAT13, Kathy (a trainee) knew that gay men are not allowed to donate blood. A colleague questioned her knowledge saying ‘is it not?’ [legal for gay men], and when Kathy responded ‘no’ then commented ‘you’re joking!’ The discussion in the group continued

with other trainees questioning why -as all blood is screened for hepatitis, HIV etc- are gay men excluded. The discussion closes with the following exchange:

- Mick: So why can't they perform exactly the same tests [on gay men's blood]
 Kathy: They won't do it, they won't take that risk
 Mick: It's ridiculous!
 Sally: A heterosexual person can carry HIV hepatitis or any other form- the same as any-
 Mick: Same as anybody. That's daft (laughs)
 FT1: But that's the way it is
 Kathy: That's the way it is

We can observe in this extract that the trainees now comprehend that gay men are excluded from blood donation, and that they present this as not being fair – palpable in the phrases 'it's ridiculous' and 'that's daft'. These assessments of the situation also function as a display of their own liberalism, which the trainer (in conjunction with Kathy) try to separate out from 'fact'. The trainer does this by reinforcing the present state of inequity for gay men ('but that's the way it is') after Mick's remark, in order to emphasize that although Mick may indicate that he feels gay male exclusion from blood donation is foolish, that does not undermine, threaten, or negate the existence of the exclusion. One obvious problem with this task, however, is that legislative discrimination and social attitudes are conflated. Fact and opinion are given equal weight in the exercise, which can result in the magnitude of structural inequality being downgraded and seen as parallel to social attitudes. One way of reducing trainees' confusion/incomprehension, and the tendency to individualize discrimination would be for trainers to list national and European legislation, equality and workplace policy and present a brief overview of the general context which could be supplemented by 'stories' and particular cases. A 'true or false' quiz, or 'general knowledge test' (Stewart, 1999: 419) could also be used to impart this information in a clear, unambiguous form (e.g., 'True, or false, lesbian and gay male couples can get married in the UK?'). These sorts of materials are commonly available in manuals and resource packs (for example, the list of true or false statements on 'sexuality, sex education and the law' provided in a teachers' pack produced by the

Health Promotion Service Avon, 1999:12). In general though, the questions (and reactions to the answers) revealed trainees' widespread ignorance about policy and legislation relating to lesbian and gay issues, and it was clear that trainees were, on the whole, simply unaware of the existence and extent of structural discrimination. For example, (7Q10) 'Weren't you allowed in the American forces to be gay?' was effectively corrected by the trainer explaining the 'don't ask don't tell' policy which in effect didn't "allow" lesbians and gay men to *be gay*, rather, the trainer responded 'you have to live a lie [and] pretend you're heterosexual or you say you're lesbian and gay and then get kicked out' On the whole, trainers were prepared to provide this information, and did so successfully.

(5) People and Projects Questions (n= 19)

Nineteen questions were asked about specific people and projects, some of which are shown in Box 8.5. These questions appeared in nine of the sessions.

Box 8.5: People and Projects Questions

- 1Q8 "How vulnerable is the project to like attracting paedophiles?"
- 4Q4 "Is Base 51 a drop-in centre or can you ring up, 'cause I was wondering whether sort of like telephone call rather than face to face"
- 11Q6 "Pat?" (i.e., Is Pat out of Eastenders a lesbian?)
- 12Q4 "Wasn't there something [murder of a gay man] not long ago?"
- 12Q25 "Is there a group available for people who are bisexual, or is it always gays and lesbians?"

These questions entail the speaker claiming a knowledge deficit, and asking the trainer to provide specific knowledge. The questions in this category cover a wide range of topics, some of which are potentially remote from the trainer's specific area of expertise (e.g. whether a blind woman could work in a children's nursery). Conversely, some of these questions are very clearly related to the trainer's presented expertise (n=8), for example 1Q8 (above). A number of these questions are in the domain of popular culture (n=7). For example, related media figures such as Justin Fashanu, or Pat from Eastenders (11Q6), or current events reported in the national media such as the latest MPs' sex scandals, or the murder of a gay man (12Q4). The media and popular culture questions

often displayed a mixture of the trainees indicating *some* awareness of famous lesbians and gay men, yet seeking clarification or more information, e.g., 11Q10 “There was one of the Rolling Stones were gay. I can’t remember which one”. It was not always clear, what - if anything – was being sought by the question beyond a name or description of a person, event, or location. In fact questioners seemed often to be satisfied with the provision of just this information. Largely, therefore, these questions are unproblematic for the trainer, and are probably only worth engaging with in any depth if the knowledge being sought directly relates to their work practice, as in the case of 4Q4 asked by an NHS-direct telephone advisor. When compared to general ‘understanding’ questions (category 1), people and places questions, seeking purely knowledge and information, constitute a much less troublesome group of questions for trainers.

(6) Questions about the Meanings, Derivations and Correct use of Terms and Symbols (n=15)

Fifteen questions are grouped under this heading, and a selection of them are provided in Box 8.6. These questions appeared in six different sessions, but eight of these questions fell in LGAT6; the session with lecturers and postgraduates.

Box 8.6: Term Meaning Questions

- 1Q3 “We wanted to know what a dental dam was”
- 6Q2 “But how does it work? They would call each other ‘queer’ or ‘dyke’ or whatever I mean, and they would be comfortable if people from their community would call them with such terms. Is it true?”
- 6Q8 “Why a ‘cat’ [as a stereotype associated with lesbians]”?
- 6Q11 “Is that the- Yeah, I just wanna check, have I got that right when I’m saying that’s [heterosexual] the preference towards the other sex?”
- 7Q11 “Can I just ask a question. What’s cottaging? [...] Why do they call it cottaging?”
- 11Q5 [searching for word ‘heterosexual’] “What’s normal – what do you call that?”

An interesting aspect of these questions is that they highlight that it is not safe for trainers to assume even basic knowledge of meanings of words like ‘bisexual’, ‘heterosexual’ and

‘homosexual’ (e.g., 6Q11, 11Q5). Trainers should check with groups *initially* whether they know what terms for different sexualities mean⁵. Many lesbians and gay men, including trainers, use vocabulary which may be unfamiliar to heterosexual trainees. Training manuals often provide a glossary of key terms. Zuckman and Simons (1996: 5-10), for example, under ‘finding the right words’ list definitions of LGB related terminology, and indicate whether usage of the word in the work place is appropriate or not. Yet manuals do not stress the importance of addressing word meaning and use directly with participants at an early point during training.

The presence of 6Q11 shows that uncertainties about word meanings can occur at rather a basic level. In LGAT 11, a trainee’s confusion over the meaning of bisexual (she thought bisexual meant heterosexual) lead to difficulties completing the opening language exercise.

Jill: Like bisexuals I don’t think that ever comes up on anything does it just see couples walking down the street don’t you

FT1: Mm

Jill: And that’s it

FT1: Yeah

Jill: Basically you think and if they live in a house and they’ve got kids that’s basically a family intit the old fashioned idea of a family

FT1: Yeah

[13 lines omitted]

Train: Yeah yeah so there’s something about lesbian visibility and bisexual invisibility

[a further 14 lines omitted]

Jill: Bisexual I suppose is what everybody what most people think is a normal thing

Jan: A lot of them really are more like erm nasty words aren’t they

FT1: Yes yeah absolutely well let’s get those down lets look at what’s out there in society we don’t have to agree with it

[another 29 lines omitted]

Jan: I think that’s heterosexual

FT1: What what

Jan: Bisexual what most people think is normal bisexual

Jill: Is it? Is that, is that, oh hold on I’ve got it wrong haven’t I

Train: Yeah you’re thinking of heterosexual aren’t you

Jill: Well that’s how much I know isn’t it (laughs)

Jan: I won’t be criticizing but you know

⁵ However, this may degenerate into laughter and an opportunity for certain groups of trainees to make salacious comments. For instance, when one group of young people (outside the core data set) were asked what ‘heterosexual’ meant they retorted with phrases such as ‘getting jiggy jiggy’ and ‘boom boom’, which are not only euphemistic but elided whether they understand that heterosexuality involves sex with people of different genders.

Jill: Yeah oh well
 Train: The ideas that I can kind of think of-
 Jill: That's heterosexual isn't it
 Jan: I mean me is me really, I don't know really what to put
 Jill: Cos I know the difference between gay men and lesbians but bisexual hold on that's either a man that goes with a woman or a man or the other
 Train: That's right so-
 Jill: I've done that wrong now haven't I (laughs)
 Train: Never mind cross that out

The trainee (Jill) initially comments that: “Bisexuals, I don't think that ever comes up on anything does it. Just see couples walking down the street don't you”. The conversation continues, and the trainer wrongly assumes that Jill is describing the more insightful issue of bisexual invisibility. It is only later in the exercise after Jill discusses bisexuality again (“bisexual I suppose is what everybody what most people think is a normal thing”), that another trainee -Jan, who's a gay woman- deals with the problem by pointing out to Jill “I think that's heterosexual”. The conversation degenerates into the group talking at cross purposes and the trainer becomes more determined to encourage them to focus on the task in hand. This example highlights that basic knowledge cannot necessarily be assumed by trainers.

Other questions in this category attest to this at a more ‘advanced’ level. As lesbian and gay trainers are familiar with a range of sub/counter-cultural terminology (e.g., ‘queer’, ‘dyke’, ‘gay’, the double women's symbols etc) and (importantly) the appropriate *uses* of that terminology (i.e., when it might be heard as offensive and when not), they need to be careful not to assume trainees also have this knowledge. Sub-cultural language meaning and language usage are often conflated in these questions. As Zuckerman and Simons (1996) allude to in their manual, the appropriate *context* in which to use terms is not trivial and has important ramifications for lesbians and gay men in terms of reclaiming pejorative terms, the right to name ourselves, and have our labels respected. Conveying to trainees which words they should and should not use to describe lesbians and gay men is perhaps more important pedagogically than trainees understanding the nuances and derivations of LGB language. This issue was most fully and directly addressed by the male trainer in LGAT6. His response to 6Q2, provided in the extract below, demonstrates

how both intent, and an ‘insider/outsider’ differentiation can convey appropriate language usage, as a participant (James) is able to accurately complete his point.

MT1: Not always no. I mean I think so often we when we have conversations about language it boils down to the intent behind the language and who’s using the language and I think there is there are ways in which y’know a group of gay men may get away with sort of going “Oh you old queen” and y’know talking to each other in a way which would be acceptable in that group and in that context but which somebody coming in from outside-

James Wouldn’t be acceptable

MT1: Wouldn’t be acceptable erm

In LGAT 5 the (white) trainer extends the ‘insider/outsider’ distinction by comparative usage of ‘nigger’, explaining “if I used it it would be unpleasant in the extreme but some Black men choose to use it about themselves”. He then encourages a Black trainee to explain that the sub-cultural use of ‘nigger’ is a form of pride, and a female participant interjects “do you think it like takes away the pain of a word if you like reclaim it”. The trainer agrees with both trainees’ interpretations, adding “I think that’s the intent, to sort of neutralize, diffuse the word, or give it another meaning”. The trainees’ comments suggest that the ‘insider/outsider’ comparison – perhaps in conjunction with pejorative terms applied to, and reclaimed by, other groups – is a successful mechanism for teaching suitable language use.

Only two questions addressed sexual practices – in relation to safer sex (1Q3) but also in relation to sexual practices generally (e.g., ‘cottaging’). This is perhaps surprising given that sexually explicit terms are often generated during the language exercise. Both these questions generated laughter and ‘jokes’ from the groups. In response to the dental dam question a male trainee commented that ‘they taste of Wrigley chewing gum’, to which the male trainer responded ‘hubba bubba’ at which they, and the group, laughed. Similarly the question regarding cottaging results in the female trainer making a jokey comment (“cos toilets look like a nice cottage” [laughter]), before the male trainer continues to answer the question more seriously. It is likely that although most trainees would not know the meaning of terms such as ‘top/bottom’, ‘rimming’, ‘dildo’, ‘fisting’

and so on, asking for an explanation would be difficult in training. This lies in contrast with the question taken from Marcus (1999: 155) at the beginning of this chapter ‘Do lesbians use sex toys?’ In my data, questions of a sexual nature are uncommon, however, this does not necessarily preclude them being asked in other training sessions – for example, the “classic” question ‘what do lesbians do in bed?’ - and trainers should be prepared for questions of a sexual nature. In sum, again, questions in this category were generally successfully answered by trainers, and did not create difficulties in the way that the questions analysed in Chapter 9 did.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING/TRAINERS

There are a number of recommendations distilled from the previous discussion of categories that could be usefully applied to training. Questions seeking understanding (category 1) are likely to have a dilemmatic quality for trainers, because they demand communicating to the speaker both information and an *interpretive stance* on the information. Trainers can (and do) struggle with which response ‘route’ to take and whether or not attempt both simultaneously. Providing a purely factual response to a question of this type could leave trainers feeling as though they had left assumptions embedded within the question unproblematized. One example of this is provided in the trainer’s answer to the question, offered by one trainee Dan ‘Have you ever met anybody who regrets coming out?’ Below is the trainer’s response:

- MT1: Erm (0.6) I haven't myself personally, I've never met somebody who's I-I mean I've met people who still wish they weren't gay
- Dan: Yeah
- MT1: And who regret the fact that they are gay erm for a variety of reasons some religious, some around, erm some around actually erm having families erm. One of the problems I think for a lot of people tends to be more gay men is say y'know it's very unlikely that as a gay man I'm ever gonna y'know ever gonna have any kinda relationship with a child
- Female: Yeah
- MT1: Erm that is in any way mine erm and that is y'know t-t-that people can have (.) regrets like that, coming out itself is is generally reckoned to be good thing to do (.) erm I- I seem to remember one of the Stonewall surveys erm an-they they've done an awful lot? ((they say)) that ninety seven percent of people say that coming out made

- their life better (1.8) y'know erm (0.6) presumably there are people
 who can have (.) y'know terrible reactions I've also heard people say
 I came out at the wrong time
- ?: Mm
- MT1: Y'know I think (.) y'know (.) for example I if I was advising a fourteen
 or year old fifteen year old at school I would be ((breathy)) very very
 cautious about saying "yeah come out at school" (1.8) y'know I would be
 very very cautious about that, in fact I would have to say
 that I'd probably advise them not to.

The first notable point about the trainer's answer to the question is its length and complexity. It is a long answer to a question that could have conceivably been answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no', because the trainee is asking whether the trainer, personally, has met someone who has regretted coming out. There are some interesting features of the answer, in both its content and design, which point to trainers straddling the (potential) divide between providing trainees with factual answers and giving them an interpretation of 'the facts'. The elongated 'erm' and pause at the beginning of the answer suggests that the trainer is aware of the potential difficulties of the question and is taking them seriously. His long answer is managing some the difficulties the question presents for him. If he simply answered 'no, I haven't', then his experiential authority may be challenged by Dan, who could perhaps retort 'oh I have', thereby undermining trainer's "authority". Additionally, if the trainer minimally responded 'no', trainees could extrapolate from his emphatic stance that there is no complexity surrounding the 'decision' someone makes to come out. The trainer would be guilty of discounting the impact oppression has on lesbians and gay men, and misrepresenting 'out' lesbians and gay men as individuals who always have an easy time, and never experience homophobia or heterosexism. Conversely, if the trainer was to unequivocally say 'yes' then he could imply that coming out is universally problematic, and thus collude with the negative connotations about homosexuality that the term 'regret' denotes.

The manner the trainer constructs his answer illustrates that he 'is aware of all sides of the argument' (Liddicoat et al., 1994, quoted in Antaki & Wetherell, 1999: 8), and is navigating a course which acknowledges this. The trainer is careful to communicate that any 'regret' attached to coming out is linked with characteristics accorded that particular individual rather than coming out per se. Therefore, in this example we can see the trainer

managing some of the issues related to communicating ‘facts’ (e.g., ‘ninety seven percent of people say that coming out made their life better’), and his interpretation of them. For example, ‘I *would have to say* that I’d *probably* advise them not to’, contains softeners (e.g., ‘probably’) which imply the trainer’s own regret that the advice not to come out is necessary in some circumstances. There can also be a mismatch between the questioner and trainer, i.e., it may transpire that the *speaker* is acting as though the problem is one of knowledge, but the trainer acts as though the speaker has an *understanding* deficit. Thus, communicating understanding to LGAT trainees presents a challenge for trainers; far more so than providing exclusively knowledge-based answers as in categories 4, 5 and 6.

Second, the data indicate an approach trainers can usefully adopt regarding personal questions. If trainers *are* willing to have personal questions asked about them and their life, then this can be indicated to the group by them describing personal experiences, and revealing personal information. Nonetheless, this is a risky strategy because they may be asked questions they dislike or find intrusive or upsetting (as are both trainers in LGAT12 and LGAT13 – see Chapter 9). If trainers want to make their personal experience ‘off limits’ a good way of signaling that is precisely *not* to draw on their personal experience as fodder for training. The problem, of course, is that it is at least partly *by virtue of their personal experience* as a lesbian/gay man that they know enough to do the training. Also, participants seem to *want* the kind of personal experiential material that comes from trainers talking about their own lives: ‘the stories like, you know, when I first realised that I might be gay or lesbian’ (Janine). Further, some trainers also want the experience in training of ‘hav[ing] your experience validated, to actually to feel safe to put forward your experience, and to actually have that heard by people’ (Saul). Thus, although stimulated by different –though related- sets of conditions *both* trainers and trainees value personal information. Therefore, from both the perspectives of trainers and trainees, curtailing personal experience wholesale would impoverish the training experience.

Third, trainers should strike a balance between allowing, and more importantly engaging with, trainees’ professional practice concerns, but also not allowing the group to

‘prevaricate’. When trainers do not share the same occupational background as the trainees questions relating to specific elements of their practice can become a forum (as occurred in LGAT 6) for the group to talk between themselves to the exclusion of the trainer(s). On the other hand, this points to the trainer ideally sharing the same occupation as trainees, or having in-depth knowledge about their work. Fourth, an important part of LGAT must be communicating facts about how lesbians and gay men are oppressed. The presence of questions requesting further information about legislation, policy and procedures highlights that trainees simply do not know the extent to which the law discriminates against lesbians and gay. Therefore, trainers are correct in their assertion that they need to present ‘hard facts’. Trainers, therefore, need to be aware of the current legal situation (for instance, the lowered age of consent for gay men, the establishment of a same-sex partnership ‘register’ in London, the repeal of Section 2a in Scotland). Fifth, the people and places questions were broad in scope, which suggests that trainers need to be prepared to answer a diverse range of questions of this type, and keep abreast of current LGB people/or characters in the mainstream media. Sixth, it appears from my data that certain terms can cause real problems in the smooth conduct of training sessions and are worth considering in more depth – at the very least to ensure that trainer and trainees can understand each others’ vocabulary. A universal understanding of word meanings cannot be taken for granted.

Trainers tended to answer questions immediately after they were asked. There is nothing unusual about this given the normative turn taking rules of conversation, however, trainers do not *have* to respond in this way. There are a number of other ways trainers could manage (potentially difficult) questions. In LGAT 2 the trainers ‘collected’ questions and then used them as discussion topics later in the session, this could be a neat way of deflecting troublesome issues or topics. Trainers could also answer a question by raising another question, or in a less “confrontational” manner probing the trainees reasons for asking the question. This would result in the trainee being ‘eased’ into the position of having to justify their question, or the stance embedded in the question. Taking the hypothetical example, of ‘do lesbians use sex toys?’, a response could incorporate something approximating ‘could you expand on that a bit because I’m not

sure how to answer, when you say sex toys, what exactly do you mean?’ Another pedagogic strategy would be to open the floor to the group on receipt of a question (‘That’s a very interesting question...what do other people think?’). It is worth trainers bearing these various tactics in mind, and remembering that they do not inevitably have to answer questions *on their own terms* - they could tease out mundane heterosexism within the question and treat that as the focus of the response, deflect the question, or step down and let the group or a co-trainer respond.

A final recommendation is that trainers do not memorise training manual questions and answers because they are not directly transferable into the training situation. Trainers need to be (and usually they are) far more creative and flexible in the answers they provide to questions as they appear in situ. The questions why has this been asked, why has it been asked *now*, and other cues and references to the local context of the interaction are what trainers (in general) are constructing their answers in relation to, and it is this attention to local concerns which makes a good answer possible. The ability to pick up and work with these cues spontaneously and imaginatively, as they emerge in the ongoing process of the session are an important aspect of what makes a good trainer: a ‘fluent answer’ (Anthony) is crucial.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated some of the differences between the way training manuals represent questions and answers and how questions *actually* occur in training. I have discussed six themes that the questions in the core data set were grouped into, that is: general ‘understanding’ questions; questions about the trainer’s life, experience, and practices; professional practice questions; questions about lesbian and gay related legislation, policies and procedures; questions about specific people and projects and; questions about the meanings, derivations and correct use of terms and symbols. Interestingly, the general ‘understanding’ question mapped most closely onto the sample questions provided in manuals, which suggests that such guides are not preparing trainers for the majority of questions asked in training. Manuals, it would appear, need to expand

the range of questions they provide, and reflect and modify the *form* the questions take. Let's return to the answer to the question 'Do lesbians use sex toys?' provided at the beginning of the chapter. The answer provided by Marcus communicates that lesbians are no different to any other group of people. He responds that 'all kinds of people' use sex toys, and lists various categories of individual who use sex toys to back up his claim. His answer deflects the assumption embedded within the question that the use of sex toys is related *specifically* to lesbians. It does not address the heterocentric perspective that lesbians must use sex toys (particularly dildos, vibrators and other objects which penetrate the vagina) because sex is not feasible without a penis, or penis substitute. In fact, the answer is deliberately vague about which sex toys are in question; he refers to the absent (but implied) dildo as 'various sexual implements'. The answer side-steps the entire issue of how lesbians have sex without a penis. Further, the answer normalises sex toys by claiming that their use is universally represented in a wide variety of groups ('male and female, gay and nongay, old and young, religious and agnostic'). This reveals that Marcus is presuming that the question implies that the use of sex toys is wholly negative, but again this is not addressed directly in the answer. In interaction, being able to deliver the answer that Marcus supplies would be difficult, and (potentially) construed as defensive as the message delivered by the response is "I'm not going to answer your question". The crux of these criticisms is that the response to a question such as this is (inevitably) left wanting when the question is stripped of its surrounding context. The answer frames the question in a particular light, but the question could be functioning very differently, by asking how lesbians can have sex without a penis, for example. I have sought to highlight the contrasts between questions and answers in manuals, and questions and answers as they arise within the flow of training.

This chapter has focused on the breadth of questions in my data, and I have systematically analysed the variety and distribution of questions. I have explored some of the issues that trainers face when answering questions, balancing societal and structural concerns with an individualised more 'engaging' response to questions about the negative impact of legislation on lesbians and gay men, for example. The question themes I have explored impact *differently* on trainers' ability to respond to them 'successfully'.

Questions falling in the first three categories are more problematic for trainers, and the next chapter progresses this argument further by exploring how the local context, construction and sequential organisation of these questions creates impediments for trainers.

Chapter 9

Difficult Questions: A conversation analytic perspective

This chapter has four aims. First, I extend the thematic analysis of questions asked by trainees presented in Chapter 8, by presented a fine-grained and detailed analysis of questions trainers found particularly difficult and seemed to struggle to answer ‘successfully’, with the pragmatic goal of improving training, by highlighting that answering questions goes far beyond ‘provid[ing] accurate information’ (van de Ven, 1997: 222), as some of the training literature suggests. These ‘difficult’ questions fell into the first three categories of questions discussed in Chapter 8 (together constituting approximately 60% of the question and answer data). Second, by basing this analysis primarily on data recorded from ‘live’ training sessions, I offer an example of the value of studying (naturally occurring) action directly, in place of psychologists more usual reliance on retrospective reports of action. Third, I extend the research on question and answer design - already developed in work on presidential and news interviews (Heritage & Roth, 1995; Clayman, 2001), medical encounters (Heritage, 1998; Heritage & Sorjonen, 1994), survey interviews (Houtkoop-Steenstra & Antaki, 1997; Heritage, 1997) and job interviews (Button, 1992) - into the new applied arena of lesbian and gay awareness training.

Conversational analysis (CA) has been the focus of major debates about its political utility, for (say) advancing feminist understandings of gender and sexuality (McIlvenny, 2002). Some discourse analysts have suggested that conversation analysis presupposes an underlying equality between speakers (e.g., Billig, 1999a) and that DA lends itself more naturally to analysis of oppression because ‘unlike conversation analysis, discourse analysis regards social life as being characterized by conflicts of various kinds’ (Gill, 1996: 143). Sue Widdicombe (1995: 111), on the other hand, defends the political utility of CA, arguing that by deploying a particular politics ‘as the pre-established analytic frame’ the credibility and cogency of the analysis can be undermined. For critically-orientated conversation analysts focusing on the turn-by-turn construction of mundane

interaction can prove to be a rich site where ‘social inequalities are experienced, and resistance is accomplished’ and ‘detailed analysis’ can be ‘politically acute’ (Widdicombe, 1995: 111; see also Kitzinger, 2000a). Critical discourse analysts (CDA) have objected to CA’s exclusive preoccupation with the ‘participant’s orientation’, in that if a speaker does not ‘orient-towards’ particular issues (such as gender) then they are not available for analysis (e.g., Billig, 1999 a, b; Wetherell, 1998). Proponents of CA have argued that politics should be ‘brought in’ by the analyst *only* after paying close attention to what is actually occurring in the data. The debate between Michael Billig (1999a, b, on the ‘side’ of CDA) and Emanuel Schegloff (1999a, b, on the ‘side’ of CA) played out in *Discourse & Society* exemplifies how passionately and extensively different positions are argued for. Therefore, finally, this chapter contributes to the developing body of work (e.g., Kitzinger & Frith, 1999; Kitzinger, 2000abc) which uses conversation analysis to develop a more ‘critical’ and politically-engaged social science.

This chapter offers detailed analyses of three questions, one from each of the first three coding categories. The three questions analysed here arose in the context of three different training groups (LGAT 12 with youth workers, LGAT 13 with police officers, and LGAT 2 with clinical psychologists respectively). They involve three different trainers, one gay man and two lesbians; all three trainers (but unfortunately none of the trainees asking the question) were also interviewed after the training session. For the purposes of the analyses which follow, the three questions and answers (but not supplementary data from interviews or from earlier in the training sessions) were re-transcribed so as to preserve more of the features of their production, including emphases, pauses, cut-off sounds, overlapping talk, and so on – all of which have been found to be salient to participants in conversation and to contribute to their understanding of the actions being performed. The Jeffersonian transcription system used is one commonly employed by conversation analysts (e.g., Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; ten Have, 1999; see also Chapter 2).

(1) Where did AIDS and HIV come from?: General ‘understanding’ questions

The largest single category, which accounted for around a quarter of all questions in my sample was the one I labeled ‘general understanding questions’ in that they were not specifically about the trainers’ lives and experiences, nor about specific policies and procedures (either in the broader society, nor in relation to the trainees’ own profession), nor did they deal with particular named people, or projects. Rather, as discussed in the previous Chapter, trainees seemed to be pursuing their understanding of lesbian and gay issues across a range of different topics with no specific immediate application in mind. Despite the topical similarities between the questions in my data and those provided in manuals, there are, as I will show, dramatic differences between the design of questions in the two sources. In the training manuals, questions are crisp, clear, and ‘clean’ - purged of false starts, self-corrections and hesitations, naked of the hedging and cautions in which questions so often come wrapped, and severed from their surrounding context. Both the sample questions, and the potted ‘model answers’ sound bland, dry, and formulaic. Like so much other advice on ‘communication’ (c.f. Cameron, 2000; Kitzinger & Frith, 1999), the ‘catechisms’ of question/answer sequences provided in these manuals are far removed from the cut and thrust of real interaction.

Let us look, as an example of the way in which these questions, and the answers to them, actually ran off in real interaction. I will focus on a question raised in a training session with youth workers about the relationship between homosexuality and HIV/AIDS. Such questions are common enough that educators (and others) have compiled lists of ideal “answers” for use in training. The most commonly recommended approach is to acknowledge that an association between HIV/AIDS and homosexuality exists as a social stereotype, and then to debunk it. For example, one manual presents as myth the notion that “AIDS is a gay disease” and offers trainers the model factual response: “The World Health Organization says 75% of people with AIDS were infected through heterosexual sex. In the United States, heterosexual teens are the largest growing segment of the

population with AIDS” (Zuckerman & Simons, 1996: 35). The same approach (with the same statistic) is presented in another training manual:

Despite the facts that throughout the world, 75% of those infected with HIV – the virus responsible for AIDS – are heterosexual, and that well over 90 percent of newly infected adults acquire their HIV-infections from heterosexual intercourse, many uninformed people continue to associate AIDS with homosexuality. (McNaught, 1993: 6)

These manuals uniformly assume that trainees may themselves believe that gay people are likely to have AIDS and that it is the job of the trainer to rid them of that association. However, perhaps reflecting the success of HIV/AIDS public education programs in recent years, this was never the case in my data. Across the core data set, whenever trainees raised the issue of HIV/AIDS, they did so in the context of *challenging* any association between HIV/AIDS and homosexuality. For example, in LGAT 7 with residential social workers, the issue of HIV is introduced by a trainee who reports a news broadcast to the effect that ‘the heterosexual percentage [of people contracting HIV] is higher’. She says:

“I know it’s awful, but in a way I’m glad that’s happened, because people [...] would say that it’s because gay people are far more promiscuous than heterosexuals. Well, that’s just completely knocked that one on the head hasn’t it, really, with the new statistics that’ve come out.”

And in this training session, the (female) trainer concurs “In the early eighties, well and throughout the eighties really, it was very much seen as a gay plague and a gay epidemic – you know, a punishment from God in some circles.” Recall police trainees in LGAT 13 labelling ‘ridiculous’ a reported prohibition on gay men donating blood, and pointing out that ‘a heterosexual person can carry HIV or hepatitis the same as anybody’. In other sessions, trainers cite the prevalence of HIV infection in Africa, and mention as a contributing factor to harassment and discrimination against gay people the ‘stereotype’ that ‘homosexuals carry disease’, that bisexuals ‘spread HIV/AIDS to the straight community’, and ‘the irrational fear of AIDS – if you were gay you’d either got AIDS or you were going to get it’. In sum, then, across my data, trainees persistently displayed

an understanding that HIV/AIDS is *not* a ‘gay disease’ and were often supported in this by the trainers. As one trainer (Ben) said in interview: “the ‘AIDS can affect anyone’ message has definitely got through”.

In the following data extract, however, the trainees’ assumption of no-association between gay men and HIV/AIDS is challenged by the trainer, who insists on a strong association between HIV/AIDS and gay men as ‘fact’ – a ‘fact’ resisted by two trainees, first Karl and then Meg both of whom challenge the trainer’s claim that “the majority of cases of HIV in the Western community are amongst gay men”. Karl suggests that, even if this was true in the past, it has “changed now” and is supported by Meg who claims that heterosexual cases of HIV/AIDS are ‘taking over’ as heterosexual infection rates are “rising”. Karl then cites heterosexual infection rates of thirty thousand a day in Central Africa. The trainer, however, continues to insist on a strong association between HIV/AIDS and gay men, and Karl eventually backs down and closes the subject by commenting that “you learn something every day”. My field notes of the interaction include that the trainer was ‘stony faced’ and ‘clearly hated this discussion’, and on the audiotape he speaks in a low, flat monotone, quite unlike the lively and engaged style which precedes and follows this part of the interaction. Throughout this exchange the trainer is detached and blunt, offering little by way of evidence for his assertion of the ‘facts’, and doing nothing to facilitate discussion of the topic which Karl has raised. In post-training interview, he said:

I think I’m tired of being asked that question – you know, what is it, eighteen, twenty years down the line. I don’t see the point of that question any more [...]
It wasn’t really what we were there for. I mean, we were there to address issues around sexuality, and HIV/AIDS training is something totally different.

The question from which this interaction arose came about 50 minutes into LGAT 12 with a group of youth workers. I will present the data in two parts – first the question and the trainer’s answer to it, and then the challenge from the trainees. Here is the first part:

Extract 1 (Part 1)

01 Karl: [Where] (.) where
 02 did um the um (.) AIDS and HIV kind'v (.)
 03 come from.
 04 (0.5)
 05 Trainer: >>°°What do you mean°°<< =
 06 Karl: = Related to like gay m-men gay people.=Do you
 07 know why that- Why- (.)
 08 <Y- Y-You always see it (.) AIDS- 'gay ooh he's
 09 got AIDS'. Where did that come from.
 10 [How did that,]
 11 Trainer: [It's the fact that] the majority of u:m (0.2)
 12 cases of HIV: (.) u::m in the Western (.)
 13 community are amongst gay men.

The most proximate version of the question to which the trainer is responding is formulated on lines 8-9, where Karl asks the trainer why so many people associate (male) homosexuality with AIDS. “Where did that come from” asks about the origins of the belief that gay men (*qua* gay men) have AIDS. ‘False beliefs’ require explanation, ‘true beliefs’ do not, hence embedded in this question is a presupposition that the association between gay men and AIDS is erroneous - that it represents false belief. Karl also claims that this false belief is commonplace (‘you always see it’) in a way that simultaneously distances him from the opinion expressed. He locates himself as a generic observer (“you”) of other people’s expressions of erroneous belief and he uses intonation to separate out the opinion ‘gay ooh he’s got AIDS’ from the rest of his talk, putting it into the mouth of the prejudiced others, the origins of whose false beliefs are in question. In asking this question, then, Karl is displaying that he himself does not believe that gay men, simply by virtue of being gay men, have AIDS.

This version of his question is a second attempt at, and reformulation of the question on lines 1-3 (“Where did the AIDS and HIV kind’v come from?”). Whereas the second version displays (as an embedded presupposition) Karl’s understanding that HIV/AIDS has no necessary association with gay men, the first version is vulnerable to being heard

as seeking out precisely that association. Karl's reformulation thereby displays an analysis of the trainer's repair initiation ("What do you mean?", line 5) as possibly hostile to this initial version. Other-initiated repair is disagreement-implicative (Schegloff, 1997), and the specific format of this particular repair is especially so. Karl's understanding of line 5 as possibly hostile is also borne out by the trainer's comment on his question in a post-training interview: "It could also have been slightly homophobic and trying to say 'well, it's gay men who started it all'"¹.

In response to the trainer's repair initiation, Karl adds a new component ("related to like gay men gay people", line 6) which makes explicit a 'relatedness' between HIV/AIDS and gay men (the self-repair to 'gay people' is presumably attentive to possible accusations of gender bias) and hence replaces the object of the initial question (HIV/AIDS) with this 'relatedness' as a object for which an explanation is being sought. For Karl, this is doing the important work of avoiding the possibility of having been heard to ask a politically-suspect question, which he has revised in the face of a challenge. Instead he builds his turn to indicate that he failed to phrase his initial question clearly enough, and that in the face of incomprehension from the trainer, he is merely clarifying his original query. Without leaving open the opportunity for a response, he continues his turn with a second version of the question, which (after some trouble and false starts) makes explicit his stance on the relationship between HIV/AIDS and gay men as a social stereotype, a common misapprehension (which "you always see", line 8). His re-use of "where does [that] come from" in the reformulated question is also a way of indicating that the 'same' question is being asked for a second time: it signals "what I am asking now is what I was asking before; this is what I intended all along". Any possible 'offence' caused by (what is now displayed as having been) the first version of the question is thus relegated to the status of a misunderstanding.

¹ Additionally, however, Karl raises his question in line 1 somewhat disjunctively (during a discussion of lesbian and gay affirmative education in schools), without preamble, and without attending to the 'topic change' thereby introduced. Sudden and apparently disjunctive or sequentially incoherent topic changes often lead to puzzlement or uncertainty in the recipient, as manifested by their initiating repair on the prior turn (Drew, 1997).

On the face of it, it does not seem as though laying claim to the *truth* of an association between being a gay man and being infected with HIV/AIDS is a likely strategy for a trainer to adopt. Health education has sought to counter what has been referred to as ‘the gaying of AIDS’ whereby AIDS risk and culpability was constructed as related directly to group membership: ‘the burden of such blame, together with the anxiety, illness, grief, and perhaps most importantly uncertainty, were all to be carried by gay men’ (Flowers, 2001). But that is exactly what the trainer does in the sequence under analysis here. On line 11, he announces as ‘fact’ the existence of an association between gay men and HIV/AIDS and this stands in stark contrast with Karl’s displayed stance towards this same belief as an erroneous notion requiring explanation. Moreover, in “correcting” an presupposition embodied in Karl’s turn, the trainer has gone out of his way to “do correcting” in partial independence of the facts. Of course, Karl is quite correct in treating as false the assumption that all or most gay men have AIDS, and the trainer does not make what would be a patently false counterclaim that all gay men (or even the majority of gay men) do have AIDS. Instead, he inverts the argument, and claims that the majority of cases of HIV involve gay men, thereby “correcting” Karl’s assumption of a weak or non-existent relationship between homosexuality and HIV/AIDS with a ‘factually accurate’ (though not logically incompatible) statement which emphasises just such an association. The effect of the ‘correction’ is to bolster (as ‘fact’) an association between HIV/AIDS and male homosexuality – precisely the association denied by both trainers and trainees elsewhere in my data.

In so doing, the trainer declines the opportunity which Karl has surely offered here to defend gay men against the unattributed but presumed omnipresent ‘slur’ that they may be disproportionately at risk of AIDS. More than this, he insists on the counter-proposal that gay men *are* disproportionately at risk of AIDS, without seeing this as something to be apologetic or defensive about. We understand this as a refusal to collude with the assumption he hears underpinning Karl’s hasty dissociation from the notion that gay men are at higher risk of AIDS – the assumption that AIDS is a stigmatised and blameworthy illness.

As Sontag's (1988: 24-25) classic analysis showed, having AIDS is (or was at the time she was writing) typically experienced as a shameful calamity 'one brings on oneself', and is linked to an imputation of guilt, confirming and exposing a 'sexually deviant' identity, and understood "as a disease not only of sexual excess but of perversity". Historically², and still in some quarters today, the association between HIV/AIDS and gay male sexual practices has been used to provide evidence that homosexuality is unnatural and sinful (for which AIDS is God's punishment), and that homosexuals should not be granted equal rights with heterosexuals because this would lead to the spread of disease (see Ellis & Kitzinger, 2002 for analysis of this argument in the British parliamentary debates on the Age of Consent; see also Chapter 5). One common strategy in this context is to deny any association between HIV/AIDS and homosexuality, but so to do can be heard as colluding with the victim-blaming inherent in the very argument contested. By contrast, to argue *in favour of* recognising just such an association, and even exaggerating it, may be one way of displaying a refusal of any suggestion that gay men are to blame for having AIDS or that AIDS legitimately carries a freight of stigma and blame.

For trainers employed on projects devoted to safer sex education amongst gay men in particular, and/or funded with HIV/AIDS money, there is also clearly a pragmatic and strategic value to emphasizing the relationship between HIV/AIDS. In a post-training interview, the trainer made this position explicit. Reflecting on what he described as his 'curt' response to Karl during the training session, he said:

I think some of it stems from the years of working in the HIV field when everyone's saying 'no, it's an equal thing', you know, and 'it's not just gay people' blah blah blah, and resources were so diluted and diverted away from gay men's work [...]. And people were scared of actually saying that statement: 'Well yeah, it is gay men. But I won't engage in blame.

This is not an entirely idiosyncratic account – a different trainer, also funded by HIV/AIDS money, makes a similar argument during LGAT 1 with social workers:

² AIDS was initially called GRID – gay related immune disorder.

The basis for this funding is epidemiological [...] Between sixty and seventy percent of new infections are still gay and bisexual men. In this country. I work with a strong point of view of saying, “Hold on. Yes, AIDS is an equal opportunities virus. It can affect anyone, and globally it does. But that’s not what’s happening here.”

In response, the social workers in this group align rapidly with the statement that AIDS ‘can affect anyone’ (with a chorus of ‘yes’ and ‘mm’) but the trainer’s claims about the high percentage of new infections among gay and bisexual men, and that AIDS is not operating as an ‘equal opportunities virus’ in the UK, are met with silence. In both training sessions, then, contrary to the training manuals, it is *trainers* who insist on an association between gay men and HIV/AIDS and *trainees* who resist it.

In the data under analysis here, two of the trainees (Karl and Meg) explicitly resist and challenge the trainer. Here’s the second part of the data extract:

Extract 1 (Part 2)

14 Karl: °Oh right >I didn’t know that.<°
 15 Are you sure [that hasn’t CHANGED NOW.]
 16 Trainer: [That’s a fact.]
 17 Karl: Oh is it?=
 18 Meg: =Yeah it’s-
 19 Trainer: [°Yeah°]
 20 Meg: [It’s] [takin’ o:ver though] isn’t it.=
 21 Karl: [Oh I thought that was-]
 22 Meg: The- the- het[>ROsexual< thi]ng is RI:sing [isn’t it.]
 23 Karl: [heterosexual]
 24 Trainer: [YEA::H,]
 25 er we:ll (.) it-it’s ri:sing but at a- at a: [mu:ch] =
 26 ? [((cough))]
 27 Trainer: =a[: much] [slower] rate and [and a lot of it’s]=
 28 Eve: [>°l]ower][rate°<]
 29 Karl: [‘Bout thirty thousand]=
 30 Trainer: =[cross infection]
 31 Karl: =[a day isn’t it? In uh] Central Africa.

32 (.)

33 Trainer: Yeah.

32 Eve: [°Central Africa's got [a particular problem] though°

33 Karl: [Heterosexual people [(.)] which is why]

34 Trainer: [Yeah]

35 Meg: Yeah

36 (0.5)

37 Karl: Oh right I didn't know that.

38 >>°I didn't know that at all°<<

39 °You learn something every day°

40 (0.5)

41 Group: ((laughter))

42 Burt: We've been he::re five hours!

43 Group: ((laughter))

44 Trainer: Excellen::nt!

45 Group: ((laughter))

46 Trainer: Oka::y um just like (.) we're gonna have a

47 break in a minute but ((continues))

Over the course of this sequence, Karl makes a total of four challenges (lines 15, 17, 21, and 29-33) to the trainer's claim of an association between HIV and gay men. In response, the trainer twice reasserts the facticity of his claim (lines 16 and 19). Even after this second blunt and unelaborated re-confirmation of the trainer's position, Karl persists (line 21), only abandoning his turn when it becomes clear that that Meg's intervention supports his position against that of the trainer (with the production of the contrast marker 'though' on line 20). Meg attempts to mitigate the trainer's claimed association between gay men and HIV/AIDS by offering evidence of rising rates of heterosexual infection (but again the trainer defends an association, claiming that heterosexual infection rates are rising only slowly) and at this point Karl makes his fourth and last challenge (lines 29, 31, 33), citing huge numbers of new infections ("bout thirty thousand a day") in Central Africa. In making reference to Africa, Karl draws on a common counter-argument to claims about the association between HIV/AIDS and gay men. However, in making this claim (lines 11-13), the trainer had specifically limited his claim to "the Western community", thereby precluding the relevance of precisely the

evidence which Karl is now introducing³ - and indeed the trainer accepts Karl's point (line 33) without treating it as competitive with his own. Having defended his claim for an association between HIV/AIDS and homosexuality by first limiting it to the West and then by discounting apparently rising rates of heterosexual infection as rising only slowly and as originating from outside the West,⁴ the trainer rests his case. Another trainee, Eve, displays her understanding, in line with the trainer's, that Central Africa and its 'particular problem' is to be discounted here, and after a short silence (line 36) during which the trainer declines further to address his point Karl concedes defeat.

What is at issue in this episode goes far beyond the 'facts' of HIV transmission, or its epidemiology. In this training session devoted to addressing and challenging anti-gay prejudice, Karl and Meg seem to treat the claim of an association between HIV/AIDS and gay men as evidence of prejudice. For this trainer, however, it is *denial* of an association which represents a prejudiced concept of AIDS as a stigmatising disease, and an attempt to cash in (perhaps literally) on gay men's suffering and death via the easy assertion that 'heterosexuals get it too'. In these training sessions we see trainees and trainers, all of them apparently committed to being 'non-homophobic', but with competing understandings of what this entails in relation to the association between HIV/AIDS and gay men.

As LGAT is explicitly designed to counter homophobic attitudes and behaviours, we can see from the episode analysed here, the question of what, precisely, constitutes a 'homophobic' attitude is far from academic. This is one of the few places in my data where a trainee directly challenges the trainer's expert knowledge. The two competing

³ It is worth noting that, by building a turn (in lines 11-12) oriented to the possibility of a counter-challenge (on just the basis on which, as it turns out, the counter-challenge is subsequently made), the trainer also thereby displays his understanding of Karl's prior turn as expressing commitment to the non-association between HIV/AIDS and gay men which the trainer here presents as 'fact'.

⁴ Although his reference to 'cross-infection' (lines 26 & 29) is somewhat obscure, and it's not clear that the trainees understood it, this too is a development of the argument for discounting the apparent rise in heterosexual infection. As he explained in post-training interview: "Over the last couple of years, statistically the rates of heterosexual infection within Western society are on in increase. But as I tried to explain, it's about cross-contamination. It'll include a lot of people who come from, say, Africa, to get treatment here [...] A lot of people will contract it abroad [...] and most of those cases will be among travelling heterosexuals."

versions operative here led to an exchange experienced as hostile by the trainer (and probably by the trainee), and of doubtful pedagogic value. Although Karl apparently does eventually accept as ‘fact’ the trainer’s peremptory information that the majority of cases of HIV in the West are amongst gay men, it is not at all clear that he has gained, from this interaction, any sense of why this connection matters to the trainer, or how to use this information in professional or personal contexts. In lines 37-39, he simply remarks, neutrally, on the fact that he has been corrected, and that he now has new information: he does not evaluate it or assess its implications, as is common following news receipts. And he closes the sequence (Drew & Holt, 1988) with an idiom (“You learn something every day”) whose blandness and generality effectively dismisses the possibility of there being any particular value to the specific ‘something’ just learnt from the immediately prior interaction.⁵

(2) Did you ask for a double bed?: Personal Questions

Questions about trainers’ own life, experience, and practices made up around 13% (n=15) of the questions in my sample. Although these were relatively few (and were concentrated in only four of the 13 sessions), the management of ‘personal’ information, is commonly discussed both by trainers and by the authors of training manuals. Trainers recognised that being out to trainees, as openly lesbian or gay persons, was itself an important part of the training, and several drew on lay versions of the ‘contact hypothesis’, musing, for example, about “whether it’s the actual substance of the training which is having the effect or whether, really, it’s just about meeting the trainer” (Ben). The fifteen questions in my data which deal with trainers’ personal lives, as discussed in Chapter 8, followed (and were built off) personal disclosures on the part of the trainers. In my data, trainees do not ask ‘personal’ questions unless the trainer has revealed personal information, on the basis of which such questions can be asked.

⁵ And indeed, precisely this ‘hearing’ of the idiom is oriented to by Burt whose “We’ve been here five hours!” treats as literal Karl’s claim to have ‘learned something’ and comments on the minimal nature of such a claim in the context of the time spent in training.

The data to be analysed here is taken from an interaction between a female trainer and police officers in LGAT 13. The episode takes place about half way through the training session, and the trainer has been taking the police officer trainees through an exercise which involves discussing, for a range of activities, whether they are legally and socially acceptable, first for heterosexuals and then for lesbians and gay men (see Chapter 3). ‘Holding hands in public’ and ‘kissing in public’ have both been discussed – the consensus being that both are acceptable for heterosexuals and unacceptable (sometimes dangerous) for lesbians and gay men – and during the course of both of these prior discussions the trainer has revealed ‘personal’ information. During the first, she described how, “walk[ing] down the street holding my girlfriend’s hand [...] I have to think “now, is it light, am I safe, are there people around?” [...] I mean, I do a risk benefits assessment before doing such a simple, ordinary, everyday thing.” During the second, she described going with her partner (a prison officer) to the prison employees’ Christmas party, and encountering a male prison officer who asked the two women to kiss each other for his sexual pleasure.

The activity now under discussion is ‘having sex in a hotel room’. The legal acceptability of this activity has been discussed with reference to the UK’s privacy laws, and the trainer is now moving the discussion on to whether or not this activity is socially acceptable. Here is the episode in its entirety. The ‘personal questions’ to be examined are on lines 22 and 27.

Extract 2

01 Train: Oka:y. So::: socially acceptable fo:r (.) lesbian ‘n
 02 gay couples to have sex in a hotel room.
 03 (0.2)
 04 Sally: Yeah [of course (it is)]
 05 Keith: [Yeah (.) I don’t see] why not. °Yeah°
 06 Train: Although as a- as a kind’v side issue um I was in
 07 Scotland a few weeks ago
 08 (0.2)
 09 Um I had to go up there for a conference and then my
 10 partner came up
 11 (.)
 12 And u:m (0.5) we were staying in B an’ B::s an’
 13 an’ hote:ls: an’ E::V’ry SI:n^gle hotel >we said<
 14 “Can we have a double roo:m”.
 15 (.)
 16 And we’d >go in the room< and there’d be two single
 17 beds in it.

18 (0.5)
 19 Because the assumption is: (0.5) wrongly (.) th't we
 20 don't- we don't- >you know< we're friends and we don't
 21 want to sleep in the same bed.
 22 Sally: Did you ask for a double bed though.=
 23 Train: =Yeah.
 24 Sally: O:h. mm
 25 (male): (I think you-)
 26 Train: 'S VERY wearing.
 27 Kathy: Did you complain'n (0.2) get it changed.
 28 (0.2)
 29 Train: Well i-it puts you in a bit of a dilemma doesn't it.
 30 Because all you want to do is: [(.)] =
 31 (male): [((cough))]
 32 Train: = kind'v (.) you know (0.5) like f sleep in the same
 33 bed as you do at home f but if you: (.) have to
 34 make a big issue out of it >I mean< we ended up
 35 shuffling beds arou:nd.
 36 Sally: mmmm.
 37 (0.5)
 38 Kathy: [Should've stood up for yourselves.]
 39 Train: [You know. And if I'd've -] Yea:h but if- if-
 40 (0.5) You know if I'd've been there with a male friend (.)
 41 and we were (0.2) we were sharing a room they would have
 42 made the assumption that we were a
 43 [couple and we'd've got a double bed when we didn't]=
 44 Mick: [I mean would- would you not have (-)]
 45 Train: = want a double [bed]."
 46 Kathy: [yeah]
 47 Janice: Yeah.

In this episode, the trainer tells a story drawn from her own experience, to counter the trainees' confident assertions (lines 4 and 5) that it is socially acceptable for lesbian and gay couples to have sex in a hotel room. There is some delicacy both in appearing to be talking about her sex life, and in directly contradicting her trainees, and both are oriented to in the story preface (lines 6-7), where 'although' (line 6) signals that despite what they claim, something else (not necessarily contrastive) can be said about this, and 'as a kind'v side issue' makes the 'something else' peripheral to the main point under discussion. The story is thus framed up as being not an illustration of the unacceptability of lesbian sex in hotel rooms (although it is certainly hearable as this, despite the trainer backing off from mentioning lesbian sex in lines 20 and 30-32) and instead brings itself off as a story about the difficulties faced by lesbians who want 'to sleep in the same bed' (lines 21 and 32-3) in hotels 'as you do at home' (line 30) – something ordinary, comfortable, mundane and without the seedy or 'naughty' implications of hotel sex.

Although the story is about a particular series of episodes (“in Scotland a few weeks ago”) it is portrayed as representative of a broader predictable pattern. The experience of requesting a double room and being given single beds is scripted (Edwards, 1994; Frith & Kitzinger, 2001) via depicting it as pervasive (‘every single hotel’, line 13), and by shifts in tense over the course of the telling, from the past tense with which the story opens (“we were staying”, line 12; “we said”, line 13) to the past habitual (“we’d go... there’d be...”, line 16), which presents a recurrent and routinised experience, and then to the present tense (“the assumption is...” “we don’t want”, lines 19, 21), which renders these singular episodes instances of a general and ongoing pattern. The repetitive nature of the event is also captured by the trainer’s choice of the word ‘wearing’ (line 26) to describe her fatigue and annoyance at her continual exposure to heterosexist assumptions, and by her use of the phrase ‘in the end’ (line 34) to describe the eventual outcome of what are thereby represented as multiple repeated experiences.

The ‘punch line’ is at lines 16-17 where the trainer reveals that, having requested a double room, “there’d be two single beds in it”. It is met with silence. This is a place where the trainees could, for example, have empathised with her dismay (“oh dear!”) or irritation (“how frustrating!”), displayed their own knowledge of the repeated and expectable nature of heterosexist assumptions (“typical!”; “I’m not surprised!”), or claimed to have learned something (“oh, I never thought of that!”). Affiliative responses like these are forthcoming earlier in the session when the trainer talks about holding hands with her partner in public: Sally displays her prior knowledge of the difficulties same-sex couples face in this situation and endorses the trainer’s account with ‘sure’; Keith responds to the hand-holding talk with an extended discussion of what he has learnt from it:

That’s something I’ve never thought of. With a heterosexual couple it’s an immediate thing – if you’re gonna hold hands, you hold hands. But what is coming across to me is that you’ve got to go through this thought process about ‘who’s around me?’, ‘what building am I outside?’, ‘what part of the city am I in?’. So you think about this, and then the simple act of holding hands is so difficult.

Similarly, when the trainer, a few minutes later, describes a prison officer's request that she kiss her partner in front of him for his sexual pleasure, the trainees align with her. "Ooooooh!", says Sally, empathising with the trainer's outrage. "So many men make that sort of comment", says Janice (who is present but silent in the episode under analysis) displaying her understanding of the routine and scripted nature of this experience of oppression.

No affiliation being forthcoming here, the trainer elects to continue, and does so with what amounts to an 'explanation' of her punch line. The two single beds are presented as evidence of the heterosexist assumptions of hotel receptionists. This underscores the point of the story: that the acceptability (or even likelihood) of two women having sex in a hotel room is remote from the minds of hotel receptionists - so remote that they do not even consider the possibility that two women might want to share a bed. This stands in contrast to the trainees' own just-previously articulated claims that 'of course' (line 4) it is socially acceptable for lesbian couples to have sex in a hotel room. In effect, then, the trainer has produced this personal anecdote as a (softened) way of doing disagreement with or 'correction' of the trainees.

The sequential environment here is such that affiliation with the trainer's explanation of the events recounted in her personal anecdote would involve the trainees in backing down from their just-stated positions – a situation they did not encounter in relation to either of the previous two pieces of self-disclosure. The two questions, first from Sally and then from Kathy, both challenge the trainer's explanation (that hotel receptionists manifest heterosexist assumptions thereby illustrating the social unacceptability of lesbian couples having sex in hotel rooms) suggesting instead that the trainer herself may have been to blame either for not asking for what she wanted (Sally) or for failing to complain when she did not get it (Kathy). Both questions focus on the behaviour of the trainer, as though the explanation for the single beds could be found in what she did (or did not) do. Sally's question raises a possible objection to the trainer's explanation (of heterosexist assumptions) and trades on the potential ambiguity of the trainer's report that she had asked for a "double room" (line 14) – not a 'double bed' – thereby introducing an

element of doubt as to whether or not hotel receptionists could legitimately be expected to have acceded to a request never made sufficiently explicit. While relying on this ambiguity, her emphasis (on ‘ask’, line 22) builds a contrast not between ‘double room’ and ‘double bed’ but between ‘asking’ and an implied failure to ask. Kathy’s question (line 27) likewise focuses on the actions the trainer could or should have taken to remedy the situation.

Their questions imply that any reasonable person would have performed the actions about which they are enquiring (‘asking’ and ‘complaining’), place the responsibility for action on the trainer, and imply that it was her (possible) failure to act appropriately that led to the problems she experienced. Even if, as it turns out, she did explicitly ask for a double bed (confirmed by the trainer on line 23), she is at fault, Kathy implies, in failing subsequently to ‘complain’ (line 27). In response to Kathy’s challenge, the action of ‘complaining’ (which sounds an appropriate thing to do when a hotel has not fulfilled a reasonable request) is recharacterised by the trainer as “having to making a big issue out of it” (line 34). For the trainer, it is precisely the contrast between the ordinariness of what is wanted and the ‘big issue’ which would be raised by ensuring she gets what is wanted which constitutes the experience of oppression. The trainer also – with the use of the phrase ‘have to’ (line 33) returns the emphasis to what she sees as the problem (the denial of her original request for a double bed) rather than what Kathy has constituted as the problem (her own subsequent (in)action). She finds herself in the position of ‘having to’ complain or make an issue of it only because her request was not honoured in the first instance. Her choices (complain, or make do by ‘shuffling beds around’) are constrained by the hotel receptionists’ prior actions, and it is those actions, and not her own subsequent behaviour which constitutes the problem. In her next turn, however, Kathy firmly reconstitutes the problem as lying in the trainer’s inaction with the injunction “Should’ve stood up for yourselves” – another recharacterisation of the action formerly designated ‘complaining’ or ‘making a big issue’, which this time makes of it a moral imperative. Kathy displays a judgement that the trainer was at fault – that in failing to assert her rights, she is deficient in courage or self-respect. Neither Sally nor Kathy consider what it might mean to be a lesbian in a social context in which two women’s

request for a double bed is either not heard or not honoured, and neither engages with the likely social and interpersonal consequences of challenging receptionists' assumptions by insisting on a double bed, or complaining about their failure to provide one.

Both questions, then, blame the 'victim' for the heterosexist discrimination she has suffered: the first implies that she may have brought it upon herself; the second (and its follow up) implies (and then makes explicit) that she is to blame for failing to fight back. As this trainer said in post-training follow-up: "It felt like victim-blaming. Like they thought I was the one to blame and it was all my fault." For the trainees, this strategy works to counter the claim embedded in this story that, contrary to what they have said, it is *not* socially acceptable for lesbian couples to have sex in hotel rooms. It also displays their stance as being pro-lesbian/gay, in that they, unlike hotel receptionists, believe that the trainer *should* have had her request honoured. They express support for the trainer's request and her right (or obligation) to pursue it when it is denied, but in doing so they disattend to the trainer's message that her request and responses to it are part of a pervasive set of assumptions which underpin the institution of heterosexuality.

(3) I mean, I don't go around saying 'hello I'm heterosexual' so why should they be marginalised?: Professional practice questions.

Around a fifth of the questions in my sample were related, by the trainees asking the questions, directly to their professional practice. As discussed in the previous chapter, these were distributed very unevenly across the training sessions, half of them coming from the session with clinical psychologists - the only session in which the trainers were themselves members of the same professional group as their trainees. Across the sessions, these included questions about referrals (to other professionals or to community groups); work with particular client groups (older adults, people with learning disabilities, youth groups); how to deal with disclosures of sexual orientation – both their own and those of their clients; and how to improve lesbian and gay visibility in the workplace.

The episode which I will examine in detail is taken from the clinical psychologists' training (LGAT 2), and comes about 10 minutes into the start of the session. Both trainers have introduced themselves to the group, and the female trainer has then asked the group for feedback on "what people want to discuss today". Five topics were raised as questions for discussion: these relate to how feelings and assumptions about homosexuality impact on clinical practice; the relationship between homosexuality and child sexual abuse; and issues of 'disclosure' and working with 'vulnerable groups'. None of these are produced in the grammatical format of 'questions', but all refer to the speaker's mental state being one of "confusion", "lack of clarity", "wondering", being "not exactly sure", "a bit confused", or "interested to know". Trainers normatively treat issues raised in this way as doing the action of questioning, and take it upon themselves to reduce the speaker's confusion, lack of certainty etc. In this session, the female trainer elicited a collection of such questions not in order, initially, to answer them, but to design the day's training around them. As each 'issue' was raised, the female trainer offered paraphrase, summary and/or commentary on it, and the male trainer wrote a memo on the whiteboard. The first five questions were all subsequently discussed extensively, and 'answers' given (or endorsed) by the trainers.

The episode under analysis here (which also features in Chapter 7) is the sixth in this series, and raises the only 'issue' not subsequently discussed by the group. It deals with the matter of whether or not lesbians and gay men (in particular within the trainees' professional organisation, the BPS) should have a separate group (or 'section', as such groups within the BPS are formally known).⁶ The questioner, Joan, explicitly conveys that she is not herself neutral on this point: she voted against the formation of a lesbian and gay psychology section within the BPS, and she accounts for this by describing the problems she experienced on her counselling course as a consequence of there having been a separate group for gay trainee counsellors. Then, in a display of open-mindedness, she alerts the trainers to the possibility that she might change her view (or might not!)

⁶ As it happens, this question itself is based on a factual misapprehension – albeit a common one in the experience of the proposers of the Section. The Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section was never intended to be a group for people who identified as lesbian or gay – but rather, in accordance with the Society rules for the formation of sections, for psychologists working in the area of lesbian and gay psychology. This has always included some people who identify as heterosexual (see Kitzinger et al., 1997).

depending on how they deal with her question, and how compelling their counter-arguments turn out to be. Her talk is hearable as asking the question: “was I right or wrong to have voted against the lesbian and gay psychology section?”, as this is the issue on which she is expressing lack of confidence or certainty as to the correctness of her own past actions in this regard. Here is the datum: (‘Train’ is the female trainer [Emma, FT6] - the male trainer is silent throughout this episode.)

Extract 3

01 Train: Any::thing- any burning issues you want to throw
 02 in at this point.
 03 (0.2)
 04 Train: There should be t- y’know (.) appropriate (.) spaces later
 05 t’say >well wait a minute< what about this:.
 06 (0.2)
 07 Joan: .hhhh U:m I just wondered whether (.) u:m hh at
 08 some time it can be: touched upon >and it may be<
 09 covered anyway .hhh u:m (0.5) °uh° I:: I voted against
 10 the lesbian’n ga:y (.) formation uh >y’know
 11 s::-< formation of the lesbian’n gay section of the
 12 BPS:. .hhh u:m becau:s:e (.) whe:n I was working in
 13 a group in [city name] when I did my counselling
 14 diploma: .hhh I felt th’t (.) um (.) by creating
 15 a separate group fo:r um (.) gay (.) trainee
 16 counsellors .hhhh robbed (.) the general group of the
 17 richness of experience and knowledge that we nee:d, .hhh
 18 um to see: (.) people as fellow counsellors not- <I mean
 19 I don’t go around saying ‘hello I’m (.) het’ro[sex]ual’
 20 Train: [°mm°]
 21 Joan: so why: .hh (.) why should they be marginalised = and I
 22 just rea:lly: .hhh I hope that also by the end’v: (0.2)
 23 toda:y I w- c’n look agai:n (.) at my decision to:: .hhh
 24 (0.5) uhh you know vote against that [>if that-<]=
 25 Train: [right]
 26 Joan: =uh-an’ see whether I:: (.) have changed my view at all.
 27 Train: So [it’s an] [issue of kind of] [sep]aratistness =
 28 Joan: [Or not.] [.hhhhh] [((cough))]
 29 Train: =or marginal[iz]at[ion][(.)ver]sus integrat[ion an’ I]=
 30 ?: [mm] [mm]
 31 Joan [((cough))] [Yes ye:s::]
 32 Train: =suppose that’s an issue for this kind of trai:ning
 33 as well
 34 Joan: °yeah°
 35 Train: That one of the (.) worries I have about doing a
 36 day on sexual orienta[tio[n]=
 37 Joan: [mm[m]
 38 Ingrid: [m]mm
 39 Train: =>is th’t< it’s no:t integrated into everybody’s
 40 general teaching.
 41 Ingrid: [Ri:ght.]
 42 Train: [‘N be]cause it’s NOT (.) I kinda feel th- that it’s
 43 kinda useful to hav someth[ing.] But (0.2) but yeah that=
 44 Ing/Jo: [mmm]

45 Train: = bit is is kind'v (.) how that wo:rks in
 46 [diff']rent ways.
 47 Joan: [mm]
 48 Train: Which kind'v applies to so many different parts of us
 49 in terms of (.) socialising as well for (.)>lesbians and
 50 gay men<=How much (.) you know the sep- separateness of
 51 that or the integration=you know it's quite a big issue really.
 52 Ingrid: °yeah yeah°
 53 (0.5)
 54 Ingrid: I think that's just made me think about ((raises next
 question))

Let us start with Joan's question-formatted talk on lines 19 and 21 ("I mean, I don't go around saying 'hello I'm heterosexual' so why should they be marginalised?") which is presented (via the "I mean") as a clarificatory reformulation of what she has just previously said. The negative observation ("I don't...") functions to imply that lesbians and gay men do repeatedly foreground their sexual identity in initial encounters with others, and is hearable as a complaint about this alleged behaviour as reprehensible because it breeches the social etiquette properly observed by people such as Joan herself. Although formatted as a question, then, this is hearable more as a reformulation of her previously stated opinion embodying a complaint against gay people.

Claims from heterosexuals that (unlike lesbians and gay men) they do not announce (or "flaunt") their own sexual identity are commonplace in environments in which lesbians and gay men exercise their right to 'come out'. The phrase Joan uses is one which has acquired, for many lesbians and gay men, the same sort of iconic status as "some of my best friends are.. [gay/black/Jewish/disabled etc]" as a representation of ignorant, if well-meaning, liberal prejudice. Although Joan presents her dilemma as having been prompted by her past experiences on a counselling course in another city, there is a more proximate impetus. Both trainers announced their sexual identities to the group (one as 'lesbian'; the other as [sort of] 'bisexual') about five minutes before she speaks, thereby performing precisely the action of which she is now complaining. The male trainer specifically talked about revealing his sexual identity in a professional psychological context (claiming that so, too, do many heterosexuals) and described running separate groups for men who have sex with men.

‘I think through clinical training I’ve got this idea quite firmly drummed into me that part of being a psychologist was revealing little or nothing of yourself to your clients. I did notice the peculiar thing that a lot of psychologists have pictures of family on their desks – never mentioned them, but there they were. But nevertheless there was this sort of unspoken rule that you weren’t supposed to disclose anything of yourself, so I went along for a long time doing that. [...] Gradually that’s broken down, and now I’m quite openly gay with- well, non-heterosexual with clients, and I run a group for men with learning disabilities who have sex with men, where all the facilitators are also men who have sex with men, and where that’s openly stated, and discussed and included within the work of the group.’ (Andy, MT8)

The position taken by the male trainer here – that being ‘out’ as gay (or ‘non-heterosexual’) and running separate gay groups is good – is exactly the position Joan attributes to others and reports having voted against.

There is a central irony in that Joan’s talk here (lines 19 and 21) conveys the embedded information that she *is* heterosexual – her point being not that she doesn’t say that she’s heterosexual because she *isn’t* but rather that she doesn’t say that she’s heterosexual (although she is) because she disapproves of public declarations of sexual identity. And as it happens, this is not the first place at which Joan has revealed her heterosexuality. While not using the announcement format (“hello, I’m heterosexual”) which she treats as customary among lesbians and gay men, she has made her heterosexuality apparent via her ‘we’ on line 17, through which she includes herself in the “general” rather than the “separate” (gay) group of trainee counsellors. Ironically, then, in the very act of complaining about people disclosing their *homosexuality* in professional contexts, Joan takes for granted, and exercises, her right to disclose her *heterosexuality*. She reveals her own heterosexuality incidentally, in passing, in the service of her complaint, and with no orientation to doing anything ‘special’. This easy and offhand disclosure of sexual identity is itself a heterosexual privilege and contrasts both with what Joan depicts as the ‘announcement’ of homosexual identity and with the elaborately ‘designed-to-be-casual’ comings out analysed elsewhere (Kitzinger, 2000a).

Joan's description of the problems caused by the formation of a separate gay group (and the associated assertion of lesbian and gay identities) on her counselling course, is designed to offer a principled account for why she voted against the formation of a BPS lesbian and gay psychology section (an accountable action here). The negative outcome she reports is that the heterosexual trainees – herself included - found themselves unable to recognise the gay trainees as fellow professionals (line 18), and the implication is clearly that it is the gay counsellors themselves who are to blame for this. Joan's account explicitly formulates the transgressions of the gay trainee counsellors in a manner typical of complaints against third parties (Drew, 1998). By forming a separate group, they 'robbed' (line 16) her (and other heterosexuals) of something both valuable ('richness', line 17) and necessary ('needed' line 17). Her selection of the term "robbing" - the unauthorised removal of property rightfully one's own - conveys her sense of entitlement to the benefits of having lesbians and gay men in her group. (The 'needs' and entitlements of lesbians and gay men, by contrast, are nowhere considered). And although the 'separate' group is 'gay' (line 15), the group from which it has separated is the 'general' group (line 16), thereby contrasting a separatist and factional gay group with the embracing all-inclusiveness of the 'general' (i.e., heterosexual) group, from which they have wilfully marginalised themselves.

Attentive to the delicacy of complaining - in a lesbian and gay awareness training session - about the behaviour of gay people (behaviour, moreover, which both trainers have already implicitly endorsed), Joan repeatedly draws back from making too overt the fact that she is blaming gay people for their own 'marginalisation'. Through her grammatical structure, she deletes the agents (presumably lesbians and gay men) responsible for creating a separate gay group (line 15). By omitting a pro-term (line 16) she avoids making explicit her accusation that it was lesbians and gay men who 'robbed' heterosexuals. And the projectable ending after "so why" (line 21) ("so why should they [go around saying 'hello, I'm gay']"?), which targets lesbian and gay behaviour as problematic, is replaced with an alternative ("so why should they be marginalised?", line 21) which targets instead the claimed negative consequences of this behaviour.

She is also attentive to the possible accusations of homophobia which might be expected to be levelled (in the context of this training session) against any psychologist who voted against the lesbian and gay psychology section. In a world in which many heterosexuals are only too pleased *not* to have openly lesbian and gay members of their groups, there is a kind of compliment to lesbians and gay men in wanting them as part of the ‘general group’, and in the assertion that they provide ‘richness of experience and knowledge’. The cut-off at line 18 (such that the word ‘gay’ is not articulated) is likewise sensitive to the danger of appearing to imply a dichotomy between ‘fellow counsellors’ and ‘gays’. Her reformulated version (lines 18-21) grants ‘fellow counsellor’ status to gay people so long as they do not foreground their own sexual identity. Her displayed willingness to reconsider her decision to vote against the section is part of the same display of ‘open mindedness’ – although her increment (“Or not”, line 28) takes back the little she seems to have offered here.

The female trainer responds, as she has to the previous five trainees, by offering a gloss which here picks up on the trainee’s own words (‘separate’, ‘marginal’) to describe the gay counsellors on her course, and provides a word (‘integration’) for the alternative which Joan would have preferred. She then extends Joan’s point beyond the BPS and counselling contexts to include the current training (one separate ‘day’ which is ‘not integrated into everybody’s general teaching’) and then to lesbian and gay social life (separately, with other lesbians and gay men only; or integrated with heterosexuals as well) and ends by characterising it as ‘quite a big issue really’. Over the course of her turn the trainer avoids any indication of disagreement or argument with Joan – in fact, she claims to *share* Joan’s concerns about the extent to which lesbians should be separate from, or integrated into, heterosexual professional and social worlds. While this empathetic response reflects and embodies her commitment, stated to the group at the beginning of training, to “understanding everybody’s viewpoint”, this was not, however, the position she took in post-training interview:

‘I wanted to put across the point that “who are you to decide that you want to learn from us when we actually need the kind of safe, guarded space to actually

feel safe ourselves, before you start thinking about wanting things from us, you know”. And thinking about her point of view actually made me quite angry really. [...] It wasn’t that she didn’t like lesbian and gay people – it was that she didn’t want to be excluded from them, she wanted them to enrich her life. “Oh, let’s do her a service!”. Which is quite outrageous really’. (Emma, FT6)

Unlike the trainers in the previous two extracts, who give ‘answers’ to the questions they are asked, this trainer does not respond by expressing an opinion about whether or not there should be a separate group for lesbian and gay psychologists. On the other hand, an ‘answer’ to Joan’s ‘question’ does not seem to be (at this point) accountably ‘missing’. Without exception, the training manuals treat questions from trainees as necessitating answers from trainers – a not unreasonable assumption, it seems, but one violated here.

The relevance of questions receiving answers is also, of course, noted in the conversation analytic literature for which the question/answer turn constitute a classic adjacency pair with a question as the first pair part setting up the relevance for an answer as a second pair part, and failure to produce one making it relevantly absent. There are several features of this particular episode which militate against the conditional relevance of an ‘answer’. First, this is the sixth in a series of ‘questions’, answers to all of which have been officially postponed through the formal organisation of talk in this particular institutional context. Second, presumably attending to precisely this treatment of prior questions, Joan indicates that she expects discussion of her concern ‘at some time’ (lines 8-9) or ‘by the end’v today’ (lines 22-23) and not immediately. Third, Joan’s talk is designed in response to an invitation to raise ‘burning issues’ (line 1), and, while downplaying the urgency, she is attentive to bringing off what she is saying as an exemplar of an ‘issue’ for discussion rather than as a ‘question’ per se.⁷ Fourth, the trainer, in turn, treats Joan as having raised, for later discussion, an ‘issue’ (repeating that word in line 27 and again in line 51), the nature and scope of which she is now clarifying.

⁷ What Joan does here is right on the boundary of the sort of talk I counted as being ‘a question’ in Chapter 8 and it illustrates the problems I faced not just in coding 162 questions into categories, but in arriving at a definitive list of 162 questions in the first instance. I am not committed to there being a fixed number of ‘questions’ in the core data set for precisely the reasons which analysis of Extract 3 enables me to discuss.

The question – if it *is* a question – about whether Joan was right or wrong to vote against the lesbian and gay psychology section is thereby firmly located, by both participants, inside a broader ‘issue’ of which it is an instance – and whereas questions make relevant answers, ‘issues’ make relevant discussions of them. More specifically, given that Joan has made clear her position on this particular ‘issue’, what is relevant from the trainer (and other participants) is agreement or disagreement.

The status of talk as ‘asking a question’ is interactionally negotiated. Trainers who find questions difficult to manage might usefully take note of the strategy adopted by the trainer here (in relation to Joan, and to the previous five speakers). By first inviting people to ‘raise issues’, and by then treating what they say (whether or not it is also hearable as ‘asking a question’) as ‘raising an issue’, she relieves herself of the interactional necessity of ‘answering a question’ – at least for the time being. ‘Issues’ are listed on a white board, small groups are formed to discuss them, and she then orchestrates (and shapes) a feedback session on each ‘issue’ in turn. The immediate advantage, for the trainer, of not having had to answer a question which made her (she says) “quite angry”, is, however, offset by the subsequent frustration of having left Joan’s point of view unchallenged.

Conclusion

The conversation analysis presented in this chapter opens up domains of further research both for conversation analysts and for lesbian and gay psychologists and activists – as well as, for the relationship between conversation analysis and politics.

First, my analysis has revealed two common features to the questions analysed here which shed light on why the trainers experienced these questions as hostile and/or difficult to deal with. In each case, the trainees’ questions embodied a challenge to the trainers’ stated or assumed position (on AIDS, on the social acceptability of lesbian sex in hotel rooms, and on lesbian/gay only groupings). If trainers were simply to treat questions as information-seeking devices (as the manuals often assume them to be) they would find themselves dealing only with the format of what is being said, while leaving

unanswered the challenge or disagreement that it implements. There is a fundamental tension for trainers between conveying information (the ‘proper business’ of training) and arguing with trainees. The second common feature of all three questions (although, again, they were not selected for this reason) was that they *blamed* lesbians and gay men for their own suffering or oppression – the implicit assumption of AIDS as a stigmatising disease in the first episode; the focus on how the lesbian trainer ‘should have stood up for herself’ in the second episode; the explicit blaming of gay trainee counsellors for ‘robbing’ heterosexuals and ‘marginalising’ themselves in the third episode. None of the trainers explicitly challenged this blaming element of the questions (although there is evidence both in the sessions and in the post-training interviews that they were aware of it). One way of thinking about how to improve training is how to find ways of challenging victim blaming when it is embedded in a question format like this.

Second, my analysis shows that real life questions and answers are not much like the model questions and answer in the training manuals. Although the ‘topics’ covered by questions in my data were typical of those reported elsewhere, the complexity and multi-layered nature of the questions asked by the ‘real life’ trainees was quite unlike the ‘clean’, information-gathering questions couched in the stilted prose of the ‘typical’ trainees quoted in training manuals. Rather, despite the best efforts of the authors, questions in manuals read as bland, dry, decontextualised and formulaic. With the introduction of the EU council directive making illegal discrimination based on sexual orientation, the demand for LGAT in the UK is certain to increase – and with it the need for training *of* trainers which is based on accurate understandings of what actually happens in training sessions. The analysis reported here has indicated that such understandings are best acquired – in researching LGAT as in researching any other social actions – through direct, careful and systematic observation of the action itself, rather than relying on retrospective reports or outcome measures. Lesbian and gay psychologists and trainers are most likely to implement social change if we can make realistic appraisals of the extent to which our strategies are successful, and can identify and modify unsuccessful strategies. Conversation analysis enables us to identify some of

the difficulties trainers experience in LGAT, thereby offering us the potential to improve training.

Third, I drew attention to the importance of the sequential location of questions in understanding what participants take them to be doing. In discussing questions (and how to answer them) as units severed from their surrounding context, training manuals routinely treat them simply as matters of information transmission (for which potted ‘answers’ are the solution) and thereby ignore actions that trainees are doing with their questions. As I have shown, a question is rarely ‘just’ a question – and what it ‘means’ to participants in interaction cannot be determined on the basis of its words alone. Whatever action a question does, it comes at a place where some other action could, and perhaps *should*, have been performed - at the end of a story, as in Extract 2, for example, where appreciation of the story is due, or after the trainer has conveyed a ‘fact’, as in Extract 1, where acceptance of the trainer’s expertise is expected. Both these locations carry quite different implications for how the question is ‘heard’ compared with, say, a (possible) question that is asked in response to a trainer’s solicitation of issues for discussion (as in Extract 3). Trainers’ (and trainees’) understanding of a question *in situ* is shaped in part by what it is being used as an alternative to, in that particular sequential slot.

Fourth, this latter observation, and the data analyses which support it, contribute to the conversation analytic literature on questions which, because it has been overwhelmingly based on (medical and news) interview data, of which the asking of questions and the giving of answers is constitutive, has focussed on how a question in a particular location is *designed*, and paid less attention to what any question (of *any* design) is doing in that particular location in the first place. Interviewers produce the occasion as an interview by ‘asking questions’ – in interviews, the asking of questions is not an accountable activity. In our LGAT data, by contrast, except on those rare occasions when a question is asked by invitation of the trainer (seven of the 117 substantive questions), a trainee’s question intervenes into or displaces some other expectable action. As I have shown, trainers (and trainees) understand questions in part by reference to the alternative action they displace

– and it is in part this contextual quality which attaches itself to the ‘meaning’ of questions which renders the sample questions in training manuals so unlike those in real life.

Chapter 10

Discussion and Conclusions

In this final chapter, I discuss the contributions, implications and limitations of the thesis as a whole and signal some ways forward for future research in lesbian and gay psychology and LGAT itself. First, I summarise how I have achieved the three aims I outlined in Chapter 1. Next, I discuss the contributions, implications and limitations of the thesis in respect to a two keys areas I have engaged with: Lesbian and gay politics and social change, and critical, lesbian and gay and feminist psychology. I conclude by providing suggestions for future directions for research on training, and in lesbian and gay psychology.

THESIS SUMMARY

In this section I summarise the findings of the thesis as a whole in relation to the three aims I outlined in Chapter 1.

(1) Developing my personal understanding of training

In Chapter 1, I stated my interest in furthering my personal understanding of training as a (lesbian feminist) trainer. Engaging with training in the ways I have in this thesis has furthered my understanding in numerous ways. As I discussed in my introductory Chapter, prior to undertaking this research I felt that training was ‘useful’. I also expected that on close examination of the phenomena “extreme”, obvious and unambiguous cases of ‘homophobia’ and heterosexism would be revealed, and that training would prove to be a microcosm of the progay and antigay arguments that are played out in wider public debates (Smith & Windes, 2000). I was naïve to expect dynamic interchange in that clearly “adversarial” form. I soon realised that this was not going to be the case, and that training was deeply imbued with liberalism. Liberalism is both morally and legally entrenched in our culture. It is as ‘settled and inescapable as the English weather’ (Peel, 2000), and tantamount to ‘common sense’ (Wetherell & Potter, 1992: 182). I was

idealistic to think that it would not be entrenched in training. A number of my analyses have highlighted that training functions to encourage already liberal people to ‘actually’ become (or display, or present themselves in ways) which are more liberal. So my investigation has politically disappointed me, as there was no space for lesbian feminist arguments in training. Trainers did not present the case that lesbianism was intrinsically good for women, and constitutes a form of resistance against hetero-patriarchy (c.f. Jeffreys, 1997). My hope that training would turn out to be a social site where trainers might encourage trainees to see the institution of heterosexuality as fundamentally problematic (Kitzinger, 1987; Radicalesbians, 1970/1988; Rich, 1980) was unfortunately not realised. A key finding was that training was deeply imbued with liberal humanist views expressed by trainees and trainers (and I include myself in this). The notion that ‘the aspirations of a wide range of...education programs...have become severely distorted, watered down, and misshapen in practice’ (McDonough, 1998: 466) resonates with me as a politicised lesbian who has been deeply embroiled in the production of her ‘core’ data-set.

Another key personal learning experience relates to the utility, or otherwise, of training manuals. My analysis has highlighted that these guidelines do not prepared trainers sufficiently for what we encounter in training, in respect to the nature and form of terms trainees generate during the language exercise, and the topic of questions, for instance. I learned how questions are not ‘just’ questions (my subjective experience prior to my analyses had roused suspicion that they involve more than simple requests for information) and answers are not ‘merely’ the provision of information, but they ‘do’ other things. I have enhanced my understanding as a lesbian and a trainer of what particular positions signal and how they become worked up and resisted (or not) by trainers and trainees. My research has underpinned my ability to produce more fitting and challenging arguments (e.g., the argument that lesbians and gay men are *different* to heterosexuals) and has given me the confidence and knowledge to be a more competent trainer.

Does training work? I have found by virtue of the ways I have explored my topic that this question is deceptively complex, and answering it is dependent on how ‘working’ is defined and on what criterion ‘working’ is assessed. The ability to answer this apparently simple question is contingent on whether ‘working’ is viewed as an outcome of training, or as part of the process, or as the particular ‘work’ or ‘business’ a segment of talk-in-interaction is accomplishing. If ‘working’ is dependent on what *I* would like training to contain - the presence of lesbian feminist arguments, and/or the absence of liberal arguments – and what *I* would like training to achieve (an antipathy towards hetero-patriarchy) then training has ‘failed’ miserably. If ‘working’ means the trainees circling numbers on the “right” end of Likert-scales in a homophobia questionnaire immediately after the session, then overall the training in my data-set does ‘work’ (Chapter 3). If ‘working’ is based on what trainers discuss as constituting success, then, when trainers report having received positive feedback from the group, felt they developed a ‘rapport’ with the group, and sensed that their exercises and arguments ‘connected’ with trainees’ personal experiences then training has worked. Trainers discussed this happening more often than not, therefore, on that basis training ‘works’ (Chapter 5). If training ‘works’ when trainees write or say that they found the experience ‘enjoyable’ then it is successful (Chapter 3), but if they present training itself and external factors as barriers to implementing changes based on training then training does not ‘work’ (Chapter 6).

Has training ‘worked’ when it provides materials that can be analysed to ‘reveal’ subtle forms of heterosexism, as in Chapter 7, or shown how talk is constructed in ways that *blame* lesbians and gay men for being oppressed (see Chapter 9)? Has training ‘worked’ when the presence, absence, and formulation of questions from trainees ‘reveals’ that trainers have more control over the type of questions asked than they ‘think’ (see Chapter 8)? Has training ‘worked’ because it is ‘institutional’ talk-in-interaction that lends itself well to examination using the tools offered by fine-grained conversation analysis, which allows the “workings” of training to be closely scrutinised, as in Chapter 9? I personally feel that my analyses of training have demonstrated that training does ‘work’ when assessed on many of these criteria. But I have also found that we can never know definitively whether or how training ‘works’, and different analyses answer different

questions, and produce different knowledges, and that all knowledge is partial. There cannot be a universal, ‘for-all-time’ “yes” or “no” answer to the question does training work? This does not preclude or nullify the political (or other uses) my findings can be put to, however, as I discuss later in this Chapter.

(2) Contributing an exploration of how and whether education and training can produce positive social change to critical, lesbian and gay and feminist psychology

The second aim I outlined in Chapter 1, was to provide research that explored how and whether education could produce positive social change. My thesis has opened up a new area of research for critical, lesbian and gay and feminist psychology, in which an opportunity is provided to ‘maximize our understanding...of those we define as our political opponents’ (Burgess-Limerick, 1998: 120). I circumvented critical psychological (and critical political) debates as to whether, or not education is a viable route to positive social change by examining a form of education itself and treating it as part of lesbian and gay attempts to improve the world. I have responded to, and advanced knowledge based on the critical (feminist) perspective, as I highlighted in Chapter 1, that education is ‘the time-honored, nonviolent means of social change, the alternative to revolution’ (Gilligan, 1993: 162).

Much of my thesis was concerned with providing ‘advice’ to trainers about how they can improve their practice, and makes the case to psychologists (both practitioners and academics) of the importance of focusing on social action in *action*, and *as* action. I considered what the “experts” (that is, trainers themselves) felt were the pitfalls in training and how they overcame them, so others could learn from their ‘mistakes’ to improve training. The pitfalls included: liberalism being deployed by trainees to ‘mask’ prejudice; finding the most efficacious way of presenting themselves professionally and as lesbians and gay men to groups; and dealing with white trainees ‘blaming’ Black and Asian trainees for ‘homophobia’. Throughout the thesis I provided – where possible – practical hints and strategies for trainers to improve their training practice. I explored

which *versions* of exercises were most ‘successful’ in Chapter 4, for instance. I found that training (is seen as) contributing to social change when it explicitly addresses the practical, workplace interventions that trainees can make (see Chapters 4, 6). I also provided analyses of heterosexism in training talk, an understanding of which, can improve training’s expediency for social change. My findings across the empirical Chapters in this thesis also highlight the ways trainees ‘resist’ engaging with lesbian and gay issues, from not attending training (Chapter 5), thorough to, disagreeing with trainers (Chapter 9).

(3) Contributing an exploration of the role of different methodological approaches to critical, lesbian and gay and feminist psychology

The final aim I outlined in Chapter 1 focused on investigating the role that different methods play in advancing our critical, lesbian and gay and feminist psychological understandings of the social world. I chose to prioritise politics over adherence to any particular theoretical/methodological approach, so I used various methods in line with my political and research objectives. The methods of data collection I have used were: homophobia scales (Chapter 3) and written training evaluation forms (Chapters 3 and 4); interviews with trainers (Chapter 5) and interviews with trainees (Chapters 6 and 7); field notes and personal reflections on training; and tape-recordings of live training sessions (Chapters 7, 8 and 9). The methods of data analysis I have used are descriptive statistics (Chapter 3); thematic analysis (Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 8); thematic discourse analysis (Chapters 6, 7); and conversation analysis (Chapter 9). I collected different forms of data, in the first instance, because this form of education has not previously been studied in-depth and I wanted to maximise the potential for gaining different understandings of it. My thematic analyses highlighted the strength of this approach in representing the scope and breadth of data-sets. It enabled me to answer the broad questions: What do trainers see as the weakness (and strengths) of their training? How do exercises work? And what types of questions get asked of trainers? My thematic discourse analyses focused in more detail on particular extracts of talk, and enabled me to interrogate how heterosexism is manifest in trainees talk (Chapter 7), and how trainees discussed their ‘behaviour’ and

‘attitudes’ following training in ways which managed their ‘stake’ in presenting themselves as enlightened, ‘un-prejudiced’ individuals (Chapter 6). My conversation analysis enabled me to understand ‘why this now?’ in the sequential organisation of ‘difficult’ questions and answers in training.

CONTRIBUTIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In this section I consider the contributions, implications and limitations of the thesis in relation to the two key areas of: Lesbian and gay politics and social change; and Critical, Lesbian and Gay, and Feminist Psychology.

Lesbian and Gay Politics and Social Change

As I indicated above, this thesis has demonstrated that training is located largely within a liberal framework. Although education is a crucial form of effecting change for critical psychologists, LGAT was launched by the homophile movement and predates psychology’s involvement in pro-lesbian/gay issues. Liberal, assimilationist, sameness politics have dominated the lesbian and gay movement throughout its history. One of the key tenets of the lesbian and gay movement has been that anti-lesbian/gay stereotypes and prejudices can be challenged and changed through education. For instance, what is now known as, the ‘contact hypothesis’ suggests that heterosexuals’ fears and prejudices will wither away following exposure to lesbians and gay men and to the realities of our lives and experiences.

Attempts to educate heterosexuals about lesbian and gay experience in order to challenge prejudice and improve our lives can be traced back to at least the late 1800s, when the first organisation concerned with homosexual rights was established in Germany in 1897 (Adam, 1987). The Scientific Humanitarian Committee, as it was known, adopted the motto ‘justice through science’ to signal both their concern with homosexual rights and with using science as political weapon (Kitzinger & Coyle, 2002). Similarly, the ‘scientific’ writings of early sexologists such as Havelock Ellis and his homosexual

colleague and sex-reformer, Edward Carpenter, aimed to promote tolerant attitudes towards homosexuals (Weeks, 2000). Ellis' involvement with pro-homosexual organisations was motivated by his view that homosexuality was a natural variant of sexual behaviour, and that promoting this view would lead to increased tolerance of homosexuality. Later, in 1928, the publication of Radclyffe Hall's novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, brought homosexual issues to public attention, and intensified the plea for tolerance. As did the educational work of 'The Mattachine Society', founded in Los Angeles in 1951, alongside 'The Daughters of Bilitis', established four years later in 1955. Both of these 'homophile' organisations lobbied for equal rights and aimed to promote the 'respectable' face of homosexuality. These organisations, for instance, advised their members to dress 'appropriately': 'men should don white shirts, suits and ties and women should appear in skirts and dresses' (Jivani, 1997: 161).

The assumption of the homophile movement was captured by Marilyn Rieger's (1953, quoted in D'Emilio, 1983: 79) declaration that 'we know we are the same, no different than anyone else', and the only way to overcome oppression of homosexuals was 'by integrating...not as homosexuals, but as people, as men and women whose homosexuality is irrelevant to our ideals'. The crucial educational message emanating from these organisations was that homosexuals were essentially *the same* as heterosexuals and on this basis they should be viewed as 'healthy', fully functioning members of society.

There was a groundswell of radical change in the late 1960s with the growth of the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movement, but alongside more radical goals, retained an interest in educating heterosexuals about lesbian and gay lives and experiences (Blumfield & Raymond, 1993). Gay Liberation Front Women (1977: 202) emphasized their dedication to: 'changing attitudes, institutions, and laws that oppress lesbians, using all or any methods from reform to revolution'. Radical and lesbian feminists differed over strategies for societal change (Douglas, 1990: 3); but their emphasis was on change itself, rather than whether such change should be revolutionary or reformist. The radical rhetoric of the 1970s (which was informed by feminist and civil rights activism) provided

a more confrontational and challenging alternative to previous assimilationist strategies. This ethos is captured in Shelley's (1977: 31) statement: 'Look out, straights. Here comes the Gay Liberation Front, springing up like warts all over the bland face of Amerika'. Contemporary lesbian and gay activism involves both liberal, assimilationist politics, and radical politics, however, liberal politics continue to dominate the lesbian and gay political agenda, as they have done throughout the history of the lesbian and gay movement. This is evidenced by the fact that the dominant organisation within contemporary lesbian and gay politics is the lobbying group, Stonewall, which was founded in 1989 and by and large focuses its energies and attentions on gradual legal reform and seeking inclusion for lesbians and gay men within the larger society. A sometimes equally prominent, but significantly smaller (and less legitimate) force within contemporary lesbian and gay politics is the group, Outrage!, founded in May 1990 by Peter Tatchell. Outrage! Seeks to disrupt the current social order by being 'unapologetic and provocative' (Outrage!, 2000), and by holding public events such as 'kiss-ins' (where a group of lesbian and gay couples kiss in a public place such as a shopping centre). LGAT, like the politics of organisations like Stonewall, is respectable, palatable, and unthreatening and seeks inclusion for, and recognition of, lesbians and gay men within society as a whole.

Given that training is (largely) located within a liberal framework, and that liberalism is typically regarded by critical psychologists as at best equalling complacency (Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 1997) and at worst, social control (Kitzinger, 1987), raises some serious questions about the capacity of training to be a tool for positive social change. Indeed, from a radical lesbian feminist perspective, education and training are, by their very nature, a liberal (rather than a radical, revolutionary) project. However, this is a rather negative platform from which to view the potential strengths (and weaknesses) of training. For me to abandon training would be, I feel, like 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater'. Given, as I noted in Chapter 1, the increasing prominence and acceptability of LGAT within professions such as the police and social work it seems, if nothing else, churlish for me to reject training out of hand. In this section of the discussion, I offer an

assessment of the pros and cons of training and education as tools for social change both at the level of ideology and at a more practical, pragmatic level.

Pros and Cons of Training and Education for Social Change

In order to evaluate the research I have conducted, and the pros and cons of training as a tool for positive social change on behalf of lesbians and gay men, it is first necessary to outline what counts as 'positive' social change. Positive social change includes a diversity of alterations or transformations to the social world at the level of individual contributions to social change, groups, social institutions, and political systems. I am defining positive social change, for pragmatic purposes, as including aims, such as, a reduction in heterosexist attitudes, securing human rights for lesbians and gay men, and over-throwing the current hetero-patriarchal social structure. These different views of what counts as positive change are located in incommensurate perspectives about what is involved in achieving an ideal social world for lesbians and gay men, and what that social world would 'look like'. I may personally not choose to get married to another woman, for example, but in my view, that does not invalidate securing lesbians' right to marry as a positive part of the social change agenda.

Positive social change could entail using 'tried and tested' formulas which have worked in the past to secure legal rights and benefits for lesbians and gay men. A clear advantage of investigating training, then, as I discussed in the previous section, is that it is located in the predominant trend throughout lesbian and gay activism to work within the mainstream political framework to alter it - LGAT is representative, therefore, of a much broader historically well used framework. LGAT is one of the few *contemporary* movements for positive social change as it is increasing, whilst other forms of 'activism' (more widespread in the 1970s and 1980s, Jay & Young, 1977; Goodman, 1980) have declined and lost momentum. The majority of grass-roots lesbian and gay public-sector and voluntary organisations devote their energies to providing *support* for lesbians and gay men, and working to address *local* concerns rather than a wider social change agenda. So although, LGAT is directed towards, and influences those individuals

attending courses, its cumulative impact can be seen as a wider social movement for social change. Trainees are, of course, not just acting as individuals but are representatives of their organisations and professions and so personal LGAT experiences feed back into workplaces and the practices of organisations. Training forms part of a broader contemporary movement, in which a ‘defense of heterosexuality’ (Herman, 1994: 8) is necessitated by lesbian and gay public policy advocacy. As the legislative mandate for professionals to take seriously the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual clients, service users and colleagues strengthens, so too will the potential for counter-argument, backlash and thus the need for pro-lesbian/gay trainers to strengthen their argumentative and discursive resources. Having said this, training does appear to be directed towards those individuals claiming to possess the most liberal and least entrenched mainstream views. It would be interesting and probably politically expedient if training courses were (re)directed towards non-professional groups, such as factory workers or shop assistants. Training should be broadened to encompass ‘the workforce’ and ‘the public’ in general, on the basis that lesbians and gay men are colleagues and part of ‘the workforce’ and ‘the public’ too, and to keep apace with human rights legislation. Training can only be delivered on this basis, however, if it receives a serious injection of funding and resources, in addition to a supportive legislative framework.

A more local version of ‘positive’ change is the reduction of ‘homophobia’. If positive social change is deemed the collective reduction of ‘homophobia’ as it is expressed by trainees on homophobia scales administered after training, then I have found training functions to create it (see Chapter 3). However, the homophobia scale (e.g., Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; Lumby, 1976; K. Smith, 1971) - the quintessential tool for measuring homophobia – has been heavily criticised. These scales, involve the heterosexual rating statements, such as ‘lesbians just can’t fit into our society’ (Herek, 1988, 1994), and these statements encode the social scientist’s (liberal humanist) judgement about what ‘unprejudiced’ attitudes consist of. In the case of the statement above a ‘non-homophobic’ view would be demonstrated by strongly disagreeing with the statement. Being ‘unprejudiced’ is constructed by scales as the display of liberal values, which entail:

‘homosexuals are no different from heterosexuals, that like heterosexuals they differ amongst themselves and have the same need for self-actualization, that homosexuality is as natural, normal and healthy as heterosexuality; and, finally, that homosexuals can be integrated into and contribute to society as a whole’ (Kitzinger, 1987: 59)

Achieving positive change on this basis compounds a liberal humanist perspective on lesbians and gay men at the expense of more radical alternatives. Despite being profoundly problematic from a lesbian feminist perspective, this finding is nonetheless useful, particularly in the public domain. It does not surprise me that the only aspect of this thesis that has received any coverage in the lesbian and gay press (*Diva* magazine) is the homophobia scales study. The ‘write-up’ reads as follows:

Old Dogs can Learn New tricks: Official. Education reduces homophobia. A new study shows that people can be effectively trained out of homophobic attitudes. Levels of homophobia in professionals including social workers, youth workers and police officers were measured before and after training, using a “homophobia scale”. Elizabeth Peel, a research at Loughborough University, found a significant decrease in homophobia after “lesbian and gay affirmative training”. Due to recent changes in social norms and values, older people are more likely to exhibit homophobic tendencies. But people categorised as “very homophobic” before training displayed the most dramatic positive change after education. It’s easy to train people out of homophobic beliefs, says Ms Peel, because these tend to be based on ignorance and misinformation (*Diva*, June 2002: 19)

‘Facts’ are rhetorically effective, numbers are convincing, and ‘realist arguments are quite attractive’ (Ibáñez, 1997: 36), partly because they make intuitive sense. As I discussed in Chapter 1, ‘facts’ about the extent of lesbian and gay oppression have been well used by activists and lesbian and gay psychologists to secure service provision and further civil rights for lesbians and gay men (see Kitzinger, 1995). The ‘fact’ that lesbians and gay men constitute a fixed 10 percent of the population is often used by lesbians and gay men working in community organisations to lobby funding bodies for money and impress on social/health providers the need for provision targeted specifically at lesbians,

gay men and bisexuals (Peel, 2002b). In relation to training provision, making the case to policy makers, training commissioners and organisations that training “officially” works can encourage the view that training is necessary and important. I have personally found the argument that training *definitely* works persuasive, and have (sometimes) convinced organisations I have liased with as a trainer to provide more training on lesbian and gay awareness. There is something to be said for constructionists ‘choos[ing] to present as “facts” and as “scientific discoveries”, politically useful claims...not because they “believe” them, but because they are politically useful’ (Kitzinger, 1999: 24). If saying that ‘psychology’ has ‘proved’ that lesbian and gay awareness training works encourages more organisations to provide training then pragmatically (if not ideologically) this must be a good thing for advancement of lesbian and gay causes. Again, we should not ‘throw the baby out with the bathwater’.

Critical, Lesbian and Gay, and Feminist Psychology

As I emphasised in Chapter 1, this thesis is primarily concerned with the mandate that ‘psychology should seek to have something to offer society on the significant problems facing it’ (Howitt, 1991: 148). I have brought psychology to bear on the ‘real world’ by focusing on an applied setting where steps towards social change are (potentially) being made, and by analysing ‘naturally-occurring’ actions in the LGAT setting. I have opened up a new topic for critical, lesbian and gay feminist psychology, and I have extended and developed work on the ‘sick heterosexual’.

Sameness and Difference

A recurrent theme, which I have mentioned at points in this thesis is whether training is informed by – at the level of ideology and in practice – ideas about lesbians’ and gay men’s sameness to, and difference from, heterosexuals. The question of sameness and difference is, ‘one with which we’re still struggling’ (Altman, 1999: 29) has been a key concern of the lesbian and gay movement, and has preoccupied lesbian and gay

psychology. Some lesbian and gay psychologists have argued that a ‘sameness’ argument is inherently heterosexist:

‘The discourses of the LGB movement and LGB-affirmative psychology have been shaped largely in opposition to anti-LGB rhetoric, they, too, find their foundation in homophobia and heterosexism. Thus, pro-LGB narrative is laced with homophobia because it must contain or envelop the other narrative in order to attack it...A key expression of the subtle homonegativity that underlies much pro-LGB narrative is the argument that “we are just like everyone else” – as if acceptance depends on that similarity, as if *only* if nonheterosexuals are just like heterosexuals should their lives be honored.’ (Bohan & Russell, 1999: 204-205).

Adopting a different stance, Fine and Addelston (1996: 69) have suggested that it is how positions are *used* which is most important: ‘difference and sameness, appear to be in opposition. But...arguments about difference and sameness have both been exploited towards the same end - to exclude women and people of colour from elite institutions and to obfuscate questions of structural inequalities organized through gender, race and class’. I have contributed to this wider debate about sameness and difference through examining LGAT, because training presents an actual environment where these types of arguments get ‘played out’ and so are available for analysis. Trainers tread a tight-rope between asserting the cultural uniqueness of lesbian and gay experience, whilst simultaneously stressing the commonality between straight and non-straight identities (Chapter 4). I have provided a wealth of useful knowledge on this, by examining, for instance, the way trainers discuss their appearance in relation to this issue (Chapter 5). Perhaps more significantly, though, I have demonstrated, by interrogating how training is dynamically played out in interaction, that *no* argument is monolithic and the positions of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ are less dichotomous and more fragmented when they appear in interaction. Chapter 9 exemplified this, by demonstrating how the argument that lesbians and gay men have *different* experiences to heterosexuals (in respect to HIV/AIDS, and getting a double bed in a hotel) can be contested by trainees in situ, with

‘victim blaming’ effect. My thesis has highlighted that it is simply not possible to “wheel out” a particular position in training and expect it to universally have the same impact.

Methods of Data Analysis and Training in Action

The argument that I have developed throughout this thesis is that in order for fields of critical psychology to flourish and develop, we need to use as many and as diverse a range of theories, methods and approaches as possible (Coyle, 2000a). I have progressed this by employing different approaches to ‘going where the action is’ rather than relying on the tests and scales on which lesbian and gay and feminist psychologists often heavily depend. I have also expanded the repertoire of methods available to lesbian and gay psychologists by using observational data of a naturally occurring ‘mundane’ topic where lesbian and gay issues are discussed in a public forum. In so doing, I have demonstrated to lesbian and gay, and feminist psychologists some of the virtues of ‘going where the action is’ to deepen our understandings of the social world. This thesis makes an original contribution to the evaluation of LGAT (and to diversity/equal opportunities training in general) by rejecting secondary assessments of training in favour of studying training in action. To my knowledge, this type of evaluation of training has never been done before. This study significantly extends and develops our understanding of training by capturing training in action, rather than relying exclusively on ‘outcome’ measures to assess whether training works. In addition to asking whether training works I have also posed and explored a new question: *how* does training work? I have explored whether and how training works both at the level of ideology and at a more practical, ‘on-the-ground’ level.

A criticism of this thesis is that I have used possibly incompatible approaches of data analysis across my empirical chapters. There are limitations in my selective use of DA to analyse the talk of dominant groups, and the adoption of a realist thematic analysis to analyse the talk of the oppressed (e.g., Chapter 7 versus Chapter 5). Within many studies this often happens covertly, for example, most DA studies chose to focus on the talk of majority groups – whites talking about non-white, men talking about women and so on – whereas I have acknowledged my selective application of DA. Overall, however, having

used different approaches is a strength of the thesis for three reasons: first, by doing so I have prioritised the political, rather than slavishly adhering to one method and used politics to justify the virtues of one method above others; second it has facilitated the ability to interrogate training in a number of different ways; third, it has enabled me to demonstrate the utility of different methods.

The benefit of homophobia scales, as I discussed above, is that it provides concrete knowledge that speaks to mainstream concerns (trainers, policy makers and the media find this type of knowledge intelligible and can use it) and carries with it the weight of “science”. The costs are that it reinforces liberal ideology, is artificial, and divorced from the real world. This approach tells us virtually nothing about how people negotiate, deal with and talk about lesbian and gay issues in their daily lives, and it cannot accommodate that notion that ‘attitudes’ are worked up and managed in situ, rather than something that people carry around inside their heads. Realist thematic analysis (like thematic discourse analysis) has the advantage of easily summarising a large body of data (Finlay, 2000), but unlike DA does not deconstruct people’s talk but respects it and takes their claims, experiences and feelings seriously, at face value. The cost is that it ignores discursive critiques and does not show the situated production of talk.

I have contributed to debate about the ability of discourse analysis to be applied to, and have an input with respect to “real world” concerns. DA studies, as I discussed in Chapter 6, stop short of making practical suggestions, because they claim that there is no mechanism which can penetrate through discourse to the ‘extra-discursive’, or/and their position lacks the political will to want to try and make recommendations on the basis of their findings. Abraham & Hampson (1996, quoted in Coyle, 2000b: 255) have stressed that the turn to discourse has resulted in a ‘retreat from practical concerns’, which ‘raises the question of the extent to which discourse analysis can act as a force for change’ (Coyle, 2000b: 255). Willig (1999a: 3/6) suggests that ‘discourse analysts have been reluctant to move beyond deconstruction and to make recommendations for improving social and psychological practice...social constructionist researchers have not been involved in ‘applying’ their work’. I grappled with this issue in Chapter 6, when I made

suggestions for trainers based on how trainees constructed themselves as ‘not prejudiced’ in interview. This most closely resembles one of the proposals Willig (1999b) makes for applying discourse analysis. She suggests that discourse analysis can ‘inform *training programmes* which make available discursive skills to those who may need them in order to resist victimization, oppression and/or marginalization’ (p. 148, emphasis in original). I argued in Chapter 6 that the way that trainees talk about making changes in their behaviour and/or attitudes as a result of training operates to distance themselves *personally* from making pro-lesbian/gay changes in their workplaces. I made a number of suggestions for trainers on this basis. For example, if trainers know how trainees construct themselves as liberal (‘enlightened’ and ‘the converted’) this could perhaps be taken account of in training (made topical by the trainer, or not) and incorporated into counter-arguments that trainers present. I feel that it is legitimate for trainers to employ discursive strategies in training which take account of the ways trainees’ position themselves. It is in the interest of improving the discursive resources trainers can draw on to know the discursive strategies trainees use to manage their identity as ‘unprejudiced’. Some feminist discursive psychologists have also engaged with this issue, and made ‘practical’ suggestions derived from their empirical work. Frith and Kitzinger (2001: 228) argue that the way young women talk about sex as ‘scripted’ enables, amongst other things, women to present refusing sex as ‘ordinary difficulties for which they are not personally accountable’. They suggest on the basis of this that ‘making [...women] aware of how this sustains the very situation with which they are dissatisfied’ may be useful for women to refuse unwanted sex more effectively. Thus my discourse analyses, contrary to claims that this form of analysis is not applicable to the “real world”, have added to existing research which applies the insights from this form of analysis to practical issues.

Further assessment of the relative strengths and weakness of different forms of data analysis can be vividly illustrated by comparing and contrasting my two analyses of the same piece of data: Joan’s talk about not voting for the establishment of the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section of the BPS, analyses of which featured both in Chapter 7 (pp. 219-220) and Chapter 9 (pp. 280- 288). Discourse analysis and conversation analysis

enabled me to reach (some) similar conclusions about the data, but on different premises, and these two approaches also permitted different things to be ‘revealed’ from the data.

The first point to make is that the data looks very different in the two versions of the extract. In Chapter 7 Joan’s talk was presented in six lines, whereas in Chapter 9 it was spread over 28 lines. The Jeffersonian transcript assisted with the analysis, because it retained the interactional and intonational features of the talk, which foregrounded the ability to answer the conversation analytic question ‘why this now?’. Joan’s talk, in Chapter 7, however, functioned as an example of a broader theme (‘refusing diversity’) which I, as the analyst had identified as an example of heterosexism, and so the analysis did not require a more detailed transcript. Thematic discourse analysis has the advantage that I was able to prioritise this theme (and Joan’s talk as an exemplar of it) and situate the data within the larger social/political context, which is in-keeping with the broad consensus in discourse analysis: ‘a critical or politically engaged stance of some kind is probably the most common position among discourse analysts’ (Wetherell (2001:385). It also has an advantage over CA in that it is a less labour intensive approach. In Chapter 7 I showed that Joan’s talk was heterosexist by interpreting its function by recourse to *my own* political position, and discussing features of her talk in light of this.

Conversely, in Chapter 9, I brought the technical insights from CA to bear on the data, honed in on precisely *how* the extract was constructed in its local sequential context and ‘bracketed-off’ my own views from the initial analysis. It transpired in my CA analysis that I was able to show how Joan’s talk was heterosexist, but this was not a pre-given or inevitable analytic finding. My use of CA may provide a more compelling case for those sceptical or unconvinced by my “gloss” on the data in Chapter 7, because using the tools of CA makes the analysis more empirically robust. CA analysis perhaps heads off the counter argument that my findings are polemical, because data are analysed ‘on their own terms’ first and foremost. This may stand us in better stead in convincing others of the validity of our arguments as critical psychologists. The disadvantage of CA for the politically engaged researcher is, however, that CA may not have ‘made relevant’ the very aspects of Joan’s talk that I found problematic. Usefully, my CA analysis did

highlight how trainers could bracket-off a ‘question’ they found difficult as an ‘issue’ for later discussion to side step the awkward position of engaging with anti-lesbian/gay views there and then. Conversation analysis has been characterised by some lesbian and gay and feminist psychologists as ‘nit-picking...[and] unable to see beyond the ‘micro’ level of the 0.2-second pause’ (Kitzinger & Frith, 1999: 311). My analysis showed that it can, nonetheless, have political uses and demonstrate how oppression is visible as a concrete social practice.

Both analyses help us move beyond the experiential awareness as lesbian and gay psychologists and as trainers that talk is subtly heterosexist, but not immediately being able to ‘put our finger on’ why or how it is heterosexist. I have highlighted the significance of examining the phenomenon in question, rather than labelling training in the abstract as a means to overcome heterosexism without examining the processes of doing this, or what heterosexism ‘looks like’ in this setting. Whereas most lesbian and gay psychologists locate lesbian and gay oppression inside the heads of ‘homophobes’ (Herek, 1998), I have developed a more social understanding of heterosexism by contrasting the tools of conventional psychology with qualitative analyses on the ‘same’ phenomena, drawing on the ideas of lesbian feminists (Kitzinger, 1987), thematic and discourse analysts (Wetherell & Potter), and conversation analysts (Kitzinger, 2000a). Developing our understandings of *how* heterosexism is manifest in talk, using whatever tools we have at our disposal, is crucial for the advancement and development of the most effective counter-arguments, as trainers, and as lesbian and gay psychologists.

My LGAT data set was limited to a small non-random selection of sessions conducted with professional groups, on the basis of which, it might seem that I have tried to make claims about training nationally (or even internationally). It would have been better if I had been able to tape-record a larger number and a wider diversity of training sessions. However, my ‘core’ data-set did map onto what training manuals discussed as occurring in training, and prior to this research *no* training sessions had ever been collected or examined in this way. Similarly, some of my ‘supplementary’ data-sets were incomplete. Ideally it would have been better if I had interviewed all the trainers before and after

training, and also interviewed trainees before training, and held more interviews with trainees after training. My research design emerged through the process of collecting data. Given that training occurs on such an ad hoc basis at present, and there are significant logistical barriers to conducting interviews as close to ‘the action’ as possible I achieved relatively comprehensive data-sets, which were, in fact, saturated with the same kinds of themes/talk.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this final section of the thesis I consider the ways forward for research on training, and for research in lesbian and gay psychology as a whole.

First, training, as I have shown, is couched within a liberal framework, it would be interesting to develop training which aimed to operate from a more radical framework. A step towards this would be to conduct an analysis of the rhetoric of the current training manual literature, so as to expose the ideological framework(s) manuals adopt. Trainers and activists could also come together and could design a course that was underpinned by lesbian feminism and/or radical lesbian and gay politics and then see how it functions in practice. I would urge lesbian and gay trainers and educators not to *assume* that ‘an attack against heterosexist oppression’ (Crouteau & Kusak, 1992: 397) would be counter productive, but to find out what happens when training is conducted from within a more radical framework. Useful questions to explore would be: What happens when a trainer *actually* suggests to a group that lesbianism is *better* for women than heterosexuality? What happens when trainers tell groups that heterosexism does *not* affect everyone equally? What happens when trainers respond to a trainee’s question by requiring them to account for their heterosexist assumptions? It may be that this would not ‘work’ and simply ‘get people’s backs up’ as the training literature implies, but as yet, as lesbian and gay psychologists, we do not know. Developing training which is more radical and challenging to the normative status of heterosexuality could be instrumental in trainees adoption of “attitudes” on heterosexuality which they have previously not had to defend or justify given its normative, “natural” status. As Billig suggests:

‘Individuals who support a majority position can be affected by hearing a minority position, which they reject [...] A social movement may mount an original challenge against what had previously been accepted as “natural”. In so doing, it may translate the “naturally obvious” into a matter of controversy and doubt, on which “attitudes” are to be taken. Thus, the issue will be talked about differently even by those who reject the minority position. The majority will be prompted to formulate new counterarguments, and, thus, their thinking is affected, and marked, by the minority position’ (Billig, 1995: 79).

Second, a way of developing the impact of the findings of this thesis on the actual practice of training would be to disseminate the findings to trainers themselves. For example, it is politically and personally useful for trainers to know that they will not normally get asked questions that they find difficult (such as personal questions) unless *they* signal to trainees that their personal life is a topic appropriate for discussion in training. Findings from my research, could be communicated to those ‘on-the-ground’ through the development of training *for* trainers courses, and through the publication of an accessible training manual (Coles, 1996). This would be a practically and politically expedient move given that, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, training is likely to be in far greater demand by organisations as of next year.

Finally, lesbian and gay psychologists could expand their focus on ‘action’. What I mean by this is that we should direct our attentions to actions occurring in the social world, rather than responses to questions in contrived or hypothetical situations, or to decontextualised items on questionnaires and scales. As training develops to become more of a ‘hot topic’ we may want to progress our examinations of the questions ‘does training work?’ and ‘how does training work?’ by observing interactions in workplaces before and following training, for example. Other ‘actions’ we may want to focus on are tape-recordings of our discussions of sexuality in other educational settings like the classroom, lecture or tutorial, or observations of the meetings lesbian and gay community groups have with funding bodies, or extend our research examining the representation of lesbian and gay issues in public debates in the media (e.g., Clarke, 2002a; Ellis &

Kitzinger, 2002). Examinations of the ‘cut and thrust’ of these discussions could shed light on how pro-lesbian/gay arguments are constructed in these settings and how they are resisted or undermined. A focus on ‘action’ also entails the *production* as well as the analysis of pro-lesbian/gay behaviour in the public sphere.

Lesbian and gay psychologists – as I was in this research – should be more invested in social change as participants and advocates as well as researchers. In the process of ‘capturing’ my ‘core’ data, I persuaded organisations that they needed a ‘sexuality’ course, I joined management committees of LGB organisations, I revised materials to evaluate training, and instituted evaluation where it was absent in LGB groups. These experiences can inform our research agendas, enable appropriate dissemination of our findings, and foster our ability to work for social change at the ‘sharp end’. I believe a personal, as well as empirical return to the concrete lived social worlds of lesbians and gay men (Plummer, 1998) would contextualise, enliven and enrich our analyses for social change. The final form of action is evaluation and I would urge lesbian and gay psychologists and activists to critically evaluate our efforts for social change (and that includes our often liberal humanist research agenda), not merely in terms of outcome, but by examining process as well.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Sample Consent Form (LGAT Sessions)

My name is Liz Peel. I am a research student in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University. My supervisor is Celia Kitzinger, who can be contacted at the Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU (Tel: 01509 223678). I am doing research on this kind of training, and I would like to be able to tape-record your session.

I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- You are free to withdraw your consent for tape-recording at any time
- You may withdraw your data from this research within 2 weeks of today's training session

Nobody except myself and my research supervisors will hear the tape of this training in its entirety. Small portions of the training may be heard by other members of my research group. When the training is transcribed, any information which may identify you will be removed. Under no circumstances will your name or identifying information be included in the reporting of this research. Parts of this training may be used in my thesis and in publications arising from it.

Please sign this form to show that you have read its contents, and consent for me to recording this training.

.....(signed)

.....(printed)

.....(date)

Appendix B
Sample Consent Form (Interviews)

My name is Liz Peel. I am a research student in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University. My supervisor is Celia Kitzinger, who can be contacted at the Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU (Tel: 01509 223678). I am doing research on lesbian and gay awareness training.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research. Before we begin the interview I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- You are free to refuse to answer any question
- You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time
- You may withdraw your data from this research within 2 weeks of this interview

With your consent, the interview will be tape-recorded. Nobody except myself and my research supervisors will hear the tape of this training in its entirety. Small portions of the training may be heard by other members of my research group. When the interview is transcribed, any information which may identify you will be removed. Under no circumstances will your name or identifying information be included in the reporting of this research. Parts of this training may be used in my thesis and in publications arising from it.

Please sign this form to show that you have read its contents, and consent to take part in this research.

.....(signed)

.....(printed)

.....(date)

Appendix C

Transcription Conventions

Jeffersonian transcription (from Atkinson & Heritage, 1994)

(Word)	Where the transcriber is doubtful of a word or phrase it is placed in brackets
((Word))	Transcriber's comments are placed in double parentheses
Wor::d	Colons mark elongation of the sound immediately before, more colons signify longer prolongation
WORD	Talk that is louder than the surrounding talk
Wo-	Marks abrupt termination of word or sound
Word?	Indicates a questioning intonation (not necessarily a grammatical full stop)
Word.	Marks a completing intonation (not necessarily a grammatical full stop)
Word,	Marks a continuing intonation (not necessarily a grammatical full stop)
(0.2)	Numbers in brackets are timed pauses in tenths of a second
(.)	Dot in brackets is an untimed micropause
>Word<	Marks speech that is faster than the surrounding speech, two arrows either side indicate especially fast speech.
hhhh	Marks an outbreath, the more 'hs' the longer the outbreath
.hhhh	Marks an inbreath, the more 'hs' the longer the inbreath
°Word°	Marks talk quieter than the surrounding talk, more '°s' equal especially quiet talk
Wo'd	Letters omitted from words or phrases
<u>Word</u>	Underlying signals words or parts of words which are stressed by the speaker
£Word£	Indicates a 'smiley' tone of voice
'Word' or "Word"	Marks reported speech
[Word]	Marks the onset and completion of overlapping speech or sounds
Wo(h)rd	Interpolated laughter

Word=Word Where one word or sound runs into another with no interval
Word! Indicates exclamation
[...] Indicates omitted material