

EMOLEMO QUEER TIMES

Free State Queer Newsletter

ISSUE 3.

In this issue:

- Secrets and Lies Dialogue
- Trans Bring a Friend
- Violence and The Queer Community
- Top 10 Reasons Why Straight Men Have Gay Sex
- Petition Endorsements



Thabo Lecoko and Teddy Mhlambi Secrets and Lies Dialogue 26 March 2021. Willow Lake Protea Hotel, Bloemfontein Free state.

SECRETS AND LIES Dialogue for Bisexual men, MSM & Gay Men

Written by Nosana Sondiyazi

Bisexual men, MSM (Men Who have Sex with Men) & Gay men were invited to tell secrets and share lies they have spoken in the past while living open or hidden as MSM & gay men.

Participants shared secrets and lies which within the group were understood and echoed to often be shared experiences. Gay men shared how they have sometimes only dated straight men and shared how they manage their relationships with married men and men with children as hidden lovers amongst many other examples. The sharing of secrets and lies became a support group for the participants.

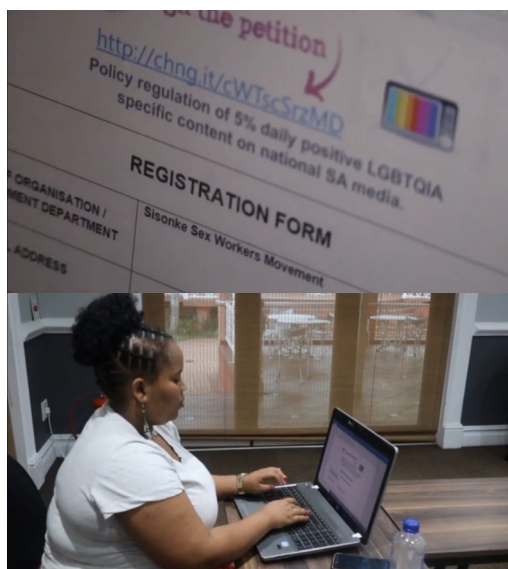
Recommendations of what they would like to see on TV when it comes to LGBTQIA+ content were discussed. They shared what they do not want to see as well, which included straight men playing gay roles and the same storylines in local series of queer people always kicked out of their homes because they are gay. They recommended happy stories with queer leads, and not just the gay friend playing the usual stereotypical gay roles. From the participants an encouragement to live outside of those stereotypes was called for.

Advocacy officer Nosana Sondiyazi explained that it is the responsibility of gay men and LGBTQIA to speak up when their human rights are being violated so Tholwana e Molemo can address Human Rights Violations and sensitize institutions and places where LGBTQIA are not treated with dignity.

Thabo Mahlatsi from PCA offered to support a Human Rights Training workshop for the participants and other members of the LGBTQIA+ community. He mentioned that the petition for LGBTQIA stories needs to be heard in parliament and it is the responsibility of the LGBTQIA to learn how to draft a policy and be aware what are the current policy regulations that SABC maintain, so LGBTQIA can challenge SABC when not broadcasting promised diversity.

Sign the petition

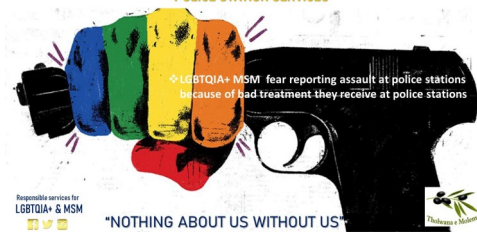
<http://chnng.it/cWTscSrZMD>



Sex Worker Nokwanda Gambushe - KZN Sisonke Coordinator. Supports PETITION - Policy regulation of 5% daily positive LGBTQIA specific content on national SA media.

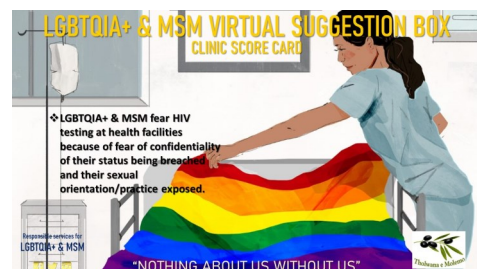
LGBTQIA+ & MSM in the Free State are invited to report anonymously how they feel about services at police stations.

**LGBTQIA+ & MSM VIRTUAL SUGGESTION BOX
POLICE STATION SERVICES**



<https://forms.gle/kzFwmy9uj7QYYfsW9>

LGBTQIA+ & MSM in the Free State are invited to report anonymously how they feel about services at health facilities.



<https://forms.gle/UTunuTzHsYqQDmxR7>

LIFE HEALING SUNLIGHT NATURE SPIRIT HARMONY

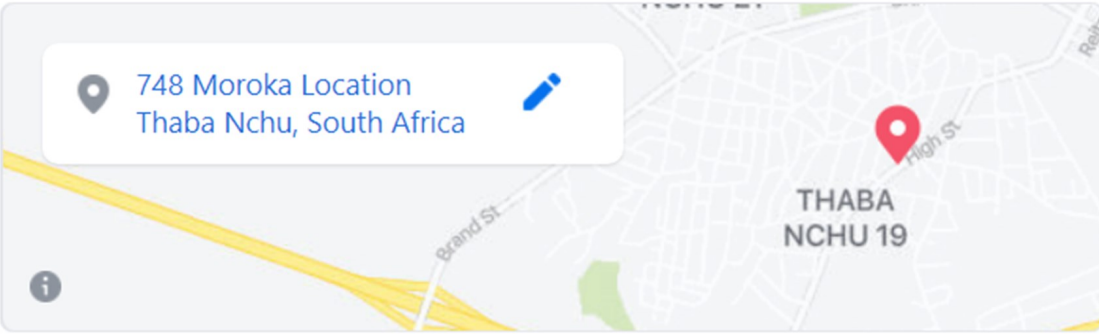
OUR SERVICES



+27 68 261 0132
 @Tholwana Advocacy
 @Tholwana EMolemo

-
- HIV Testing
 - STI Screening
 - TB Screening
 - HRT referral
 - Referral for PEP
 - Referral for PrEP
 - Psychosocial Support
 - Wellness Clinic
 - Health Advocacy
 - Linkage and Adherence to requested support
 - Condom and Lubricant Distribution
 - Community Dialogues
 - Support Group
 - Distribution of I.E.C. Material
 - Documenting Human Rights Violations

www.tholwanaemolemo.co.za
info@tholwanaemolemo.co.za
Tel. 051 436 3044



- Male condoms and lubricants, HTS, risk assessments, TB screening and STI screening
- Risk reduction counselling
- SRH information (including anal care and anal sex)
- Peer education (HIV-negative TG) & peer navigation (HIV-positive TG)
- PrEP demand creation
- Community empowerment through social capital building
- GBV screening and awareness

	LAYERS	LINKS
Biomedical	HIV self-screening Dental dams and finger cots (for transmen)	PrEP, ART, PEP, Periodic presumptive treatment for STIs, TB preventive therapy, TB treatment, Hepatitis B screening and immunization, PAP smears and PMTCT (transmen), Hormone therapy and other gender affirming care, Rectal care (for transwomen), Mental health
Behavioural	Emotional & psychosocial support Support for effective PrEP use Adherence support for TGLHIV/TB	Substance use and rehab programs Harm reduction for TG who inject drugs
Structural	Mechanism to report & record human right violations Soft support to remove gender-related barriers to care (i.e. laser hair removal) Improve SRH service delivery by sensitizing health workers and strengthening HTA program	Legal services to enhance access to justice Post-violence care

**Policy regulation of
5% daily positive
LGBTQIA specific
content on national
SA media.**

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT
ENDORSEMENTS FROM
ORGANIZATIONS**

SAME LOVE TOTI



DIFFERENT FAMILIES, SAME LOVE



TRANSHOPE



FREESTATE

**RAINBOW
seeds**



RIGHT2KNOW

TOP 10 REASONS WHY STRAIGHT

CURIOSITY

Perhaps the most common reason a gay sexual experience happens for a straight man relates to curiosity. The research suggests that these types of events happen frequently but often go unreported.



CLOSETED BISEXUALITY/HOMOSEXUALITY

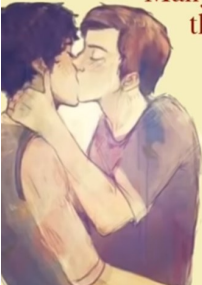
While many men may identify as “straight”, that doesn’t necessarily mean they are.

In truth, human sexuality runs across a spectrum, if you believe in the Kinsey Scale.



SITUATIONAL REASONS

All of us have needs, including men who are straight. Many men who identify as heterosexual involve themselves in gay experiences simply from a place of need.



*Examples: Men who are in prison,
All male colleges and schools,
Military service...*

RITUALISM



An unpleasant experience to be sure, but ritualism is one of the reasons straight guys will experience some form of gay sex. An example can be found in a fraternity ritual, where otherwise heterosexual men will grab another guy’s dong as part of an initiation process.

There is a fine line, however, between a simple ritual and hazing; which is designed to humiliate, emasculate and embarrass.

PROVING HETEROSEXUALITY



This reason may strike you as odd but it’s really not when you think about it. Some men who identify as straight purposely seek out a gay experience to prove they are not homosexual.

STRAIGHT MEN HAVE GAY SEX



We often hear this term but what does it really mean? In a nutshell, heteroflexibility happens when two guys who identify as straight use some type of substance and temporarily, “go gay”.

HETEROFLEXIBILITY

GAY FOR PAY

There’s an old axiom that suggests:
Everyone has a price.
To some extent, that’s probably true.
It is for this reason that some men who call themselves straight will engage in homosexual activities if the price is right.



Straight guys who are emotionally close (like gay men) have a bond. In pop culture, we call these “bromances”. But for some men who consider themselves to be heterosexual, that closeness can cause confusion.



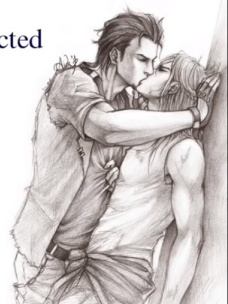
This can lead to a same sex experience between two guys, which is often shrouded in questions. Straight men do sometimes fall in love with one another. Even more rare are straight guys who become emotionally attached to gay men.

EMOTIONAL BONDING

An odd one perhaps but it does happen. There have been cases where two men have become physically intimate with one another on accident. It doesn’t happen often but it does happen.

Perhaps the most common reason is connected to the phenomenon of Ambien sex.

ACCIDENTAL



SEXUAL FLUIDITY



There was a time when strict sexual orientation boundaries were the norm. A person was either straight or gay with bi being part of the dynamic. All of that has changed in recent years.

More and more, men are coming out as “sexually fluid”. In a nutshell, to be sexually fluid means that orientation is malleable.



Violence and The Queer Community

Written by: Malwande Ndengane

One random afternoon two months ago, in mid-February, I was walking from a nearby supermarket to my place past a sparse scattering of trees and shrubs where hobos normally lay in wait for passers-by to beg for the odd silver coin without fail on a daily basis. This day was no different, as walking past these trees a shirtless hobo emerged from nowhere and before he could open his mouth for the usual, and now irksome grovel, he paused and aggressively shouted, “Akebatle male yagago!... O gay wena!” (Meaning: “I don’t want your money...You’re gay!”). There was a pang of irritation and disgust that ambushed me, but I continued walking – this was just a hobo after all. I’m assuming the hobo felt he wasn’t done making his point, so he followed me from a distance blurting out the same sentence with an eerie injection of venom more repulsive than the last. He did this til I vanished from his horizon. Being the ultra-sensitive Empath that I am, this incident struck the wrong chords with me, not least because a HOBO - that lowest man on the human totem pole - was doing it. The rabid irony of having a drifter with no guiding stars feel entitled to the sort of disdain he displayed towards someone he was about to ask for money was not lost on me. I am unsure of how hobos are socialised exactly, exemplifying pariah as they do, but it was interesting to me how this creature decided to place a sort of value hierarchy on his existence over my own – a human being with a roof over his head and food that he doesn’t have to grovel to strangers to acquire.

The incident to which I am referring, in concert with a sexual assault incident that I am still grappling with, brought me to a kind of awakening about the state of wellbeing of queer individuals in this country. Yes, South Africa is famed for its world-class progressive laws on the rights of people with gender non-conforming identities, but the reality on the ground (in the lived experiences of these individuals) does not seem to be on par with a country that proclaims to protect all of its citizens. This reality is one in which many young Black queer mxn and womxn are anxious about their safety in the communities in which they live - especially when these communities are townships. In South Africa there is a profound correlation between the violence meted out against queer individuals and townships. To understand this relationship one has to remember how and why the township settlement came to be in the first place. These were artificial geographical camps created for the purpose of policing movement of Black people as they commuted to and from the cities in which they worked during Apartheid. With a handful of exceptions, townships practically have the same character (built on barren land, have poor schools, poor access to water and sanitation services, poor infrastructure and riddled with social ills like unemployment and low levels of education).

There is a kind of alienating (and therefore dangerous) mythos fostered about queer people in the collective consciousness of these spaces – and this is that they are hypersexual, sexually perverted and their “choice” of life is an abomination. I know this because I am a queer man who grew up in a township.

There exists a palatable sense of moral superiority (on the part of the homophobic actor) in the way in which anti-queer prejudice is exercised. Most, if not all, forms of anti-queer bias draws on religious precepts and an invocation of some (suspicious) Africanism that much of the continent seems to cobble together as this era's version of Pan-Africanism. This can be seen in the number of countries that have laws that criminalise homosexuality (34 out of 54 countries). The suspicious nature of this rendition of Africanism is simply that, bar this seemingly unanimous consensus on some queerless precolonial Africa, the continent does not seem to be in unison about anything else pertinent to its collective growth. Hazard to guess it's the only bark our leaders have (in a very transparent show of frail sovereignty) in the absence of actual political teeth on the world stage.

Noxolo Nogwaza (24), Eudy Simelane, Motshidisi Pascalina (21), the Joburg 5: These are some of the young queer womxn and mxn who were raped and murdered in various townships (most of them in Johannesburg) since 2010 at the hands of young men who lived in their communities. For those perpetrators who were tried in court, it was clear in all the cases that the queer womxn were raped and then gruesomely murdered (some beyond recognition). And in all the cases, the queer womxn's bodies were left out in the open in some alleyway and somehow no member of any of the communities bore witness to these – the idea here being to intimidate any other queer mxn or womxn who dares live out their queerness without shame. Also, the killings of these individuals are accompanied by a form of rape that the media provocatively still refers to as “corrective rape” – whereby the perpetrators seek to ‘rectify’ the ‘abnormal’ queer female. The Joburg 5 were a group of five gay men who were found tied and strangled (and one bludgeoned) to death in April 2010.

Worth noting about these hate crimes (for which our criminal justice system does not have a law) is that they were all committed by groups of young Black men who lived in these communities. And they were always pre-meditated according to crime scene experts. Why? A large part of it involves some complex and learned articulation (**containing words like: ‘patriarchy’, ‘preserving the natural social order’, ‘masculine capital’ and ‘post-colonial amnesia’**) that I will dispense with because I do not have the arrogance to pretend that I am a sociologist.

The more pedestrian explanation for sexual violence of queer people is this: Heterosexual men consider effeminate queer men to be traitors of masculinity, while they think of masculine-presenting queer womxn as threatening their place at the top of the gender hierarchy. Rape, for him, is merely a way to use the victim as the object of his righteous anger, anxiety and need to control the manner in which people gender themselves in ways that are beneficial to him – because, apparently, this is exactly what other people's sexualities are about: the straight male gaze.

The act of rape is also a way through which the object of the raping affirms (via their subordination) his gender superiority.

Another interesting phenomenon, though hardly ever having occasion to appear in media headlines or feature in GBV dialogues (testament to the culture of discretion around (and silencing of) queer identities), is that of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within the queer community. According to the American Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 44% of lesbians and 61% bisexual women experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, compared to 35% of straight women. 26% of gay men and 37% of bisexual men experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, compared to 29% of straight men. 40% of gay men and 47% of bisexual men have experienced sexual violence other than rape, compared to 21% of straight men. Given South Africa's title as the ‘world's rape capital’, I imagine it would be accurate to make the assumption that these figures would be higher in our context – but especially for Black people.

Regarding the township as a sort of hotbed for all forms of violence against queer individuals, the question arises: Why? By and large this occurs in city townships like those found in Jo'burg, Durban and Cape Town – at least those frequently flagged by the media. As mentioned earlier, these places are riddled with misery and are a glaring signpost of a country that, according to the Word Bank in 2018, is now the world's most unequal society. 60% of what is mostly the Black population lives in these spaces where access to basic services is a problem, schools and healthcare facilities are grossly underfunded (if at all functional). And they tend to be overpopulated, especially where there are slums.

The best synopsis of this situation and how it relates to anti-queer violence can be found in the words of African-American writer Toni Morrison's ruminations on why it is that violence seems to be the answer to some perceived threat or problem: “...The pack. How perfectly responsible, intelligent, even mature men behave in a pack/group. How easy it is to find reasons for one's interior decay outside in someone else. How satisfying that is, if something is going wrong in your own little world and you don't want to face up to that... it's just easier, more secure, to find the fault outside.” The ‘world’ she would've been referring to in today's terms (one not so far-flung, in trope, from the 1950s America of Black-owned town social pathology she was describing) is that of young Black men who are threatened by a destabilising of a society (via subversions of masculinity by queer people) over which they believe themselves to command control. The ‘outside’ refers to the othered queer mxn and womxn living precariously in these policed spaces.

Name: Sam Mokhothu
Age: 23
Pronoun: He
Gender Identity: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay

Q: Please give us a background on your Life... Childhood... Coming out...

A: I was born in one of the largest townships in SA, Free State; Botshabelo. Growing up in a lacking LGBTI information township was very hard because people would judge you as a gay person based on the Bible ideology. Also initiation school graduates would make it difficult for us to be free wanting us to express our manhood like they did. At school we would be forced to express ourselves as what the gender states on our birth certificates, which would be depressing at times.

Some member of the community understand. And others careless about what is happening. I never experienced a coming out situation, because growing up, my life was obvious how I was and who I was.

Q: What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

A: One word is "Brave".. The Letter comes with bravery because to me being the letter G means am brave to live what I am. Lastly it means we are "Amadodakazi".

Interview by: Nosana Sondiayazi



Q: Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

A: Clair de Noir Because she has made life simple for herself not caring what people think about her. I remember when I was having a convo with her she said "I was born a man but am a woman and am gonna die a woman". And she then showed me a pic of her transitioned private part 😊😊😊.. which was awkward because it was my 1st seeing such except on TV but I was amazed that we are really evolved from an old homophobic system era.



Q: Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

A: Kylie and Kendall Jenner's dad "Bruce" because he was known globally for transitioning from male to a female.

Q: How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: Via an invitation to a gala dinner that was held at Naledi Sun but I found out later that I once tested for HIV with them unaware.



Q: What have you gained most from being introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: I experienced a lot of information and an adventure of being pampered 😊😊

Q: What is the difference between a MSM (men who has sex with men) and gay men?

A: I really see no difference.. MSM is just an abbreviation trying to accommodate "After nines" or people who are still in the closet. PERIOD

Q: What is the typical gay/MSM lifestyle you are aware of in the LGBTQIA+ community?

A: Irresponsible due to not be careful of who we associate ourselves, always being drunk and have lot of sexual intercourse.

Q: Do you know your HIV status? Would you like to test for HIV?

A: Yes I do, but would love to know if am still safe.

Q: How does COVID19 affect your life?

A: Because I am a student, it has affected my studies but we survived.

Q: What are your views on online dating?

A: It's dangerous and at some point we as LGBTQIA we tend to be targets of scammers and even serial killers, because we are attracted easily.

Q: What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

A: I wish for safety, safety, safety and safety upon the LGBTQIA community, the rest will follow.

Interview by: Nosana Sondiayazi



Name: Thapelo Chacha
Age: 30+
Pronoun: Him
Gender Identity: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay

1. Q: Please give us a background on your Life..... Childhood..... Coming out...

A: I was born and bred in a small town in the Eastern Free State called Marquard. I have always been an ambitious being, with great interest in storytelling, public speaking and social justice advocacy. From a young age I knew I was different in that my affection for human beings leaned more towards male species. I was a late bloomer.

I am a town planner by profession, a career that helps me address the social ills of the society. I hold Masters in Urban & Regional Planning from UFS. The very first university graduate in my family. Even my mom went to a college not a university. Lol.

Did I officially come out? I think for me it was a matter of seeing myself having friends who spoke the same language as I did. In the process, I lost a lot of those friends who thought I was straight. Their thoughts were so misplaced because signs have always been there. I think to my family it's not even a point of discussion. I am sure they know. I am open about friends I keep. If they ask me, I'll be honest.

Q: How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: I was invited by my friend Theo Chikuma to Secrets and Lies talk. He didn't even attend the event but I am glad I did.

Q: What have you gained most from being introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: I am often misconstrued by gay community as being rude and unapproachable. I guess I also had my own misconceptions about my fellow gays. But I got to learn that we need each other more than we think. Tholwana e Molemo afforded a befitting platform to get to know more about other members of the gay community.

Q: What is the difference between a MSM (men who has sex with men) and gay men?

A: MSM should not be labelled as being gay. My theory in life is that human beings are attracted to other human beings irrespective of gender. It just differs in degrees. I can have sex with a girl and it doesn't mean I am not gay or I am at least 'bi'. I still identify as gay because I know my affections are mostly towards men. When people tell us who they are, we ought to accept that description and not try to convince them or ourselves of what we think ought to be their sexual orientation. Gay men are those that identify themselves as such. No one should dictate the sexual orientation another person.

Q: What is the typical gay/MSM lifestyle you are aware of in the LGBTQIA+ community

A: That we are all friends.

Q: What is the typical transgender lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

A: That transgenders get more men than your non-transgender gays. Sweetness, some men are fascinated by the idea of masculinity. Everyone has a type. It's not even a competition.

Q: Do you know your HIV status? Would you like to test for HIV?

A: Yes I know my status

Q: How does COVID19 affect your life?

A: Job opportunities are so scarce. I had to cut the training I was doing at Machabeng Municipality when lockdown was declared. Ever since then, opportunities of putting food on the table are really scarce. Mind you, I started lecturing on a part time basis; and that too is quite difficult since contact sessions are minimal at institutions of higher learning.

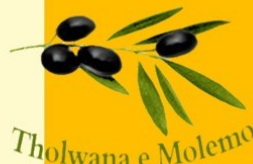


Q: What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

A: To me they are group of people who are fighting for acceptance in society. They are highly dramatic and they often make a mistake of forcing their lifestyle down the throats of everyone who doesn't belong to their community. Pride for me is an event that needs mental preparedness. I do not necessarily think it presents gayness in an efficient manner. Hence, many gay people only attend the after party.

Q: Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

A: Aldrin Sampear. He is not your typical gay man. And when he came out to the world on twitter, even I was shocked because people like him don't often come out. They live a life of secrecy for a very long time. I mean look at how long Andile Ncube has been on TV, he even got married to a woman. So I really love Aldrin.



Interview by: Nosana Sondiayazi



Q: What are your views on online dating?

A: Bloemfontein is one big intersection web. We might as well have a conference of exchanging partners. I think it's unsafe and quite a bore for small places such as Bloem. It is a waste of time. Same old people with same old sexual appetite. They should be called online sex chronicles.

Q: What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

A: Take yourselves seriously. There is more to life than sex and silly competition amongst each other. I know that the dating pool is so shallow but please stop buying sex. Build each other, be kind to one another.

Interview by: Nosana Sondiayazi



Name: Patrick Sizane
Age: 29
Pronoun: He/Him
Gender Identity: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay

- **Childhood:** I grew up loving Lebo Mathosa so you can imagine how dramatic I was as a child Lol! I was such an energetic child!! I was bullied because I was gay and I didn't even know what was gay at that time. I always told my bullies that I was going to sue them, that time I didn't even have a lawyer lol! I was surrounded by my cousins and they were my safe space. I had big dreams as a child and I was a hard worker of note. In 2003 The Nelson Mandela Foundation hosted a party for Tata Mandela and my childhood friend and I were one of the school kids invited. That day made me to realize that I belong in the bigger world.
- **Coming out:** I have never had to come out to anyone. I have always known that I am gay and I tried to "ungay" myself so many times, but I didn't succeed in my mission lol! My mom was never bothered about my sexuality and this is why I've never felt the need to come out to anyone.

Q: Please give us a background on your

- **Life:** I was born in Bloemfontein. I am the second born. I believe in being hard worker. I was born to lead!! I've been involved in organizing charity events. I was a leader for three years in a youth development organization that we formed in my neighborhood. I am a qualified radio practitioner. I love working in media. One of my dreams is to work on TV. I have worked as Content Producer, Executive Producer, and Programmes Manager for a campus based community radio station. I have facilitated dialogues and round table discussions. I am very passionate about hosting dialogues because that is how I get to learn more.



Interview by: Nosana Sondiayazi

Q: What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

A: It means freedom, expression, happiness and making a mark.

Q: Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

A: Thami Dish

Q: Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

A: Lil Nax

Q: How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: I met Nosana at a dialogue I was booked to facilitate in 2018 and from there I've been in contact with Tholwana e Molemo.

Q: What have you gained most from being introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: I have gained a lot! I've always been unbothered about challenges that other members of my community are facing, and through Tholwana I have learned about challenges that are faced by lesbians and transgender people. Since then I've been learning and using the platforms that I have to educate others.

Q: What is the difference between a MSM (men who have sex with men) and gay men?

- **MSM:** Men who have sex with other men. They are either straight, bisexual or curious. They enjoy having sex with other men.
- **Gay:** Homosexual. Being attracted to the same sex.

Q: What is the typical gay/MSM lifestyle you are aware of in the LGBTQIA+ community?

A: Cheating and sex for pay.

Q: What is the typical transgender lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

A: There's none I can mention because my interaction with trans people have always been in line with my work. It has never been outside work.



Q: Do you know your HIV status? Would you like to test for HIV?

A: Yes I know my HIV status and I would like to test for HIV, because it is good to check one's status from time to time.

Q: How does COVID19 affect your life?

A: Online learning showed me flames. I was not ready for online learning and I was under a lot of pressure because of time.

Q: What are your views on online dating?

A: Lol it is the worst!! I tried it for a month and it didn't work out well for me. I met dodgy people on the site.

Q: What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

A: To be united! To stand together and have one voice! As the community we need to stop discriminating one another.



Name: Kimmy Jones
Age: 35
Sex: She
Gender Identity: Transgender Woman
Sexual Orientation: I'm attracted to men

Q: What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

A: It means love, happiness and joy. Simple.

Q: Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

A: Somizi, I learn a lot from him, I have a lot of respect for him, and he is working very hard for himself.

Q: Who is your favourite International queer person and why?

A: None.

Q: How were you introduced to Tholwana E Molemo?

A: I was not introduced, I saw it on Facebook and I believe in most of the things they do.

Interview by: Nosana Sondiya

Q: Please give us a background on your Life..... Childhood.... Coming out

A: Life - My life has been a good experience. I still got respect and great love from everyone around me and my community.

Childhood - Has never been bad, it's been good all the time growing up. In the family of four I am the eldest and they love me dearly.

Coming Out - I don't think I came out because I always knew that I am different, I am trans and I've kept it joyful with pride.



Q: What have you gained most from being introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: I have gained lot of love and knowing more about other genders and how to communicate with them.

Q: What is the difference between a transwoman and a gay man?

A: The difference between a transwoman and a gay man is transwoman is a person who feels more like a woman and gay primarily relates to homosexual person.

Q: What is typical transwomen lifestyle?

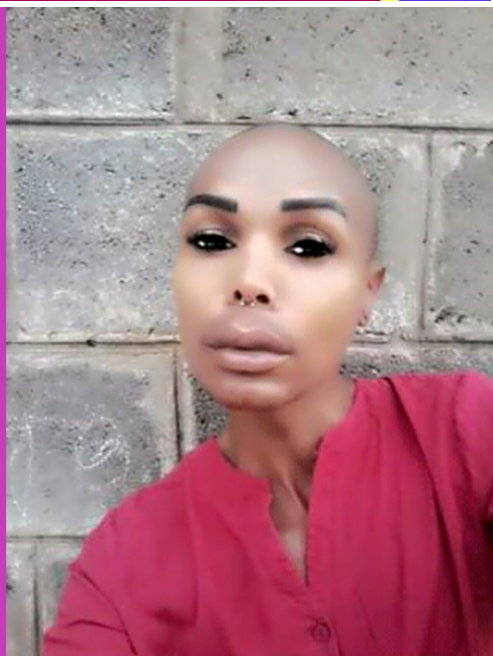
A: The typical transwomen lifestyle is in most communities they are stigmatized and people don't understand them, I think it is because of lack of information.

Q: Do you know your HIV status? Would you like to test for HIV?

A: Yes

Q: How does Covid 19 affect your life?

A: It affects us in many ways, we don't hang out anymore like we used to, now we always have to wear masks.



Q: What are your views on online dating?

A: I don't really have a problem with online dating. It's up to an individual how they engage in it.

Q: What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

A: My wish for the LGBTQIA+ community is for them to feel free and get more respect from the community and feel safe.





Name: Duncan Swarts

Age: 34

Pronoun: He

Gender Identity: Male

Sexual Orientation: Gay

Q: Please give us a background on your Life..... Childhood.... Coming out

A: I was born in Botshabelo, one of the historic towns of Free State. After my matric I later came to Bloemfontein to further my studies at CUT, FS main campus where I completed my BED (FET) Spec: EMS. I came out during my second year at varsity, when my younger brother came to also further his studies and he saw my friends during a cross dress event; he visited home and I knew right there that he is going to tell my mum. And boy oh boy he did just that! Later that day when my mum called me I knew that *ziyawa ke ngoku...* she asked me and I wanted to deny it, but something said tell her and I did. Yhoo! She didn't want to hear anything she just hung-up and only called me again after a month. From there our relationship was not easy, for almost two years. However eventually, something changed in her, and she called me and apologized for treating me the way she did. After that our relationship blossomed.

Interview by: Nosana Sondiayazi



Q: What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

A: Diversity and freedom

Q: Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

A: Nkululeko Nzabe a.k.a Nkully

Q: Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

A: Sir Elton John

Q: How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: Through one of their LGBTQIA+ advocacy programs.

Q: What have you gained most from being introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

A: That activism is not populism but helping those who cannot voice their concerns.

What is the difference between a MSM (men who has sex with men) and gay men?

A: MSM don't want to be boxed or labeled and have sex for fun and gay men are men who date other men.

Q: What is the typical transgender lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

A: Entertainment

Q: Do you know your HIV status? Would you like to test for HIV?

A: Yes, I wouldn't mind testing.

Q: How does COVID19 affect your life?

A: I almost lost my mind when COVID attacked the world; and adapting to new normal was way more stressful than the virus itself.

Q: What are your views on online dating?

A: As long its safe for everyone I see no problem.

Q: What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

A: That one day we can live in a world were we don't have to explain ourselves.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Landmark Ruling Cracks Door Open for Same-Sex Marriage in Japan

By Ben Dooley and Hisako Ueno

A court found that it was unconstitutional for the country not to recognize the unions. But change would come only if Parliament passes legislation.



Supporters of same-sex marriage outside the court in Sapporo, Japan, on Wednesday. The court handed the plaintiffs a victory but denied them damages. Credit...Jiji Press, via Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

March 17, 2021

TOKYO — A Japanese court on Wednesday 17 March 2021 ruled that the country’s failure to recognize same-sex marriages was unconstitutional, a landmark decision that could be an important step toward legalizing the unions across the nation.

The ruling, handed down by a district court in the northern city of Sapporo, came in a civil suit against the Japanese government by three same-sex couples. The lack of recognition of their unions, they said, had unfairly cut them off from services and benefits accorded to married couples, and they sought damages of around \$9,000 per person.

The couples argued that the government’s failure to recognize same-sex unions violated the constitutional guarantee of equality under the law and the prohibition against discrimination regardless of sex.

The court agreed, writing in its decision that laws or regulations that deprived gay couples of the legal benefits of marriage constituted “discriminatory treatment without a rational basis.”



Name: Thabiso Malumise
Age: 20
Pronoun: He
Gender: Male
Sexual Orientation: MSM

Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

..... It means a lot because it encourages all humans to feel comfortable with their bodies and how they feel about themselves. So it plays an important part in my life and environment also.

Q. How does COVID19 affect your life?

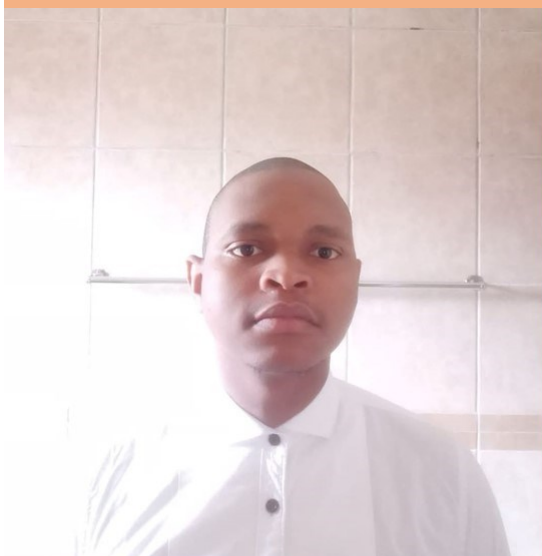
..... COVID19 made me loose lot of things, and I'm still holding up and trying to figure some new ideas on how I'm going to make my life easier to live.

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

..... To understand that we have different types of genders, sex and sexual orientations and they don't have to be judged.



Interview by: Tebogo Thabana



Name: Reaobaka Moalusi
Age: 21
Pronoun: He
Gender: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay Man

Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

LGBTQIA+ pride means being true to yourself irrespective of the obstacles. As you only live once, so why not live for yourself?

Q. How does COVID19 affect your life?

Makes it hard to meet clients since I love interacting with people. And it makes my work easier if I can meet a client should we disagree with something.

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

My wish for LGBTQIA+ is for old societal norms to change and the community to be accepted e.g. our mothers and grandparents as most people from the older generation believe that it's a sin to be gay.



Interview by: Tebogo Thabana



Name: Moeketsi Gooi
Age: 32
Pronoun: He
Sex: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay Man

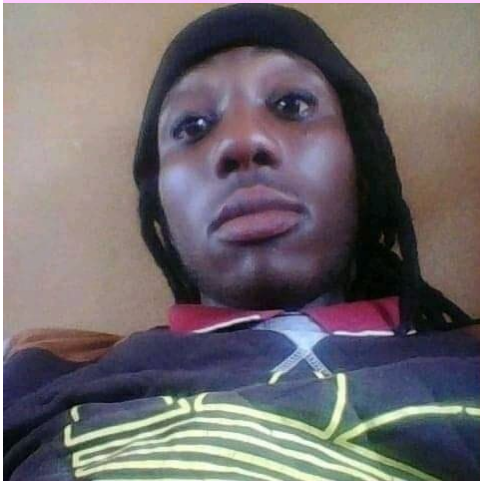
Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?It means I should express myself, be free, love who I am and also love life.

Q. How does COVID19 affect your life? I am now not the person I used to be. I am more careful these days who I socialize or who am with.

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?One thing that I wish is to stop stigma upon us.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Name: Moses Lesane
Age: 25
Pronoun: He
Gender: Male
Sexual Orientation: MSM

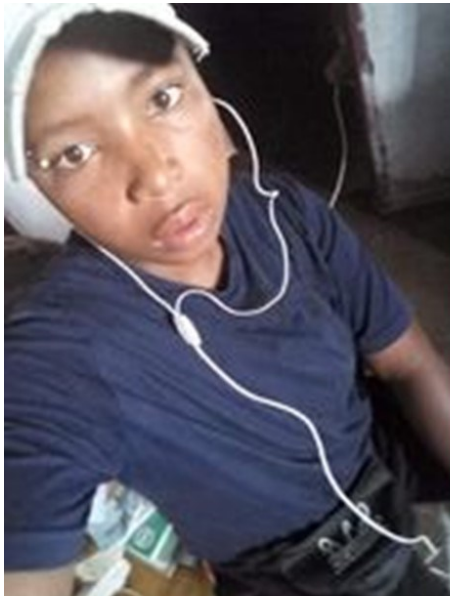
Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?It means that they must be proud of their sexuality and that platform dignified them as individuals and that will lead them to have confidence.

Q. How does COVID19 affect your life? It has affected my life so badly, because I'm now unemployed. I have nothing that will help me to survive.

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community? I wish community must accept them and support their brothers and sisters who are members of LGBTQIA+ community.



Interview by: Tebogo Thabana



Name: Seipati Jessica
Age: 23
Pronoun: He
Gender: Transgender Man
Sexual Orientation: Homosexual

Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you? ... It means a lot because that's where we make memories and also get to know each other.

Q. How does COVID19 affect your life? ... It didn't affect my life because I do everything that I used to do before.

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community? ... That our community and people around us must support us and not take us for granted. We are also a human beings. Why can't they treat us like other straight people? They must respect us and take us seriously.



Interview by: Tebogo Thabana



Name: Thabo Mahlatsi
Age: 37
Pronoun: He
Sex: Male
Sexual Orientation: Bisexual

Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?It means rainbow nation who were oppressed and denied basic human rights for a very long time by the rules of the world.

Q. How does COVID19 affect your life? Negatively because we were supposed to change our normal life to a new normal, in short it affected us emotionally and economically.

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?My wish for the LGBTQIA + is to be treated and recognized like any other sector of the population around the world.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

Name: Vusumzi Ramoluoane
Age: 36
Pronoun: He
Sex: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay Man



Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

FREEDOM.

Q. How does COVID19 affect your life?

Extended my nursing training period.

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

Love. Freedom. Employment.



Tholwana e Molemo
Interview by: Nosana Sondiyaazi



Name:
Bookholane "Hopolang"
Sekhonyane

Age:
40+

Pronoun:
He

Gender:
Transgender Male
Sexual Orientation:
Homosexual

Q. What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

It means being visible and being proud of being myself.

Q. How does Covid 19 affect your life?

- **Negatively - I live in constant fear of losing a loved one**
- **Positively - I take every day as a blessing and strive to make a positive impact in other people's lives.**

Q. What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+?

My wish is for the LGBTQIA+ to not let our sexuality define who we are. For them to embrace the diversity within the LGBTQIA+.



Interview by: Nosana Sondiyaazi



*Bookholane Sekhonyane and Tebogo Thabana Trans Bring a Friend 27 March 2021.
Bodulo Lodge, Thaba Nchu Free state.*

TRANS BRING A FRIEND

Transgender Human Rights Appreciate a Stranger

Written by Noluthando Gwedashe

27 March 2021, Bodulo Lodge, Thaba Nchu hosted 58 transgender community members from Mangaung Free State. Men and boys who were born female. Women and girls who were born male were appreciated with flowers from the LGBTQIA rainbow flag:

RED - LIFE:

Transgender people have the right to life, free from violation, free from fear of being killed.

ORANGE - HEALING:

Transgender people should strive for healing from the wounds inflicted by the stigma, hate and violations.

YELLOW- SUNLIGHT:

There is always a brighter side to life and tomorrow will bring light and new beginnings.

GREEN - NATURE:

Being transgender is natural not demonic.

BLUE - SPIRIT:

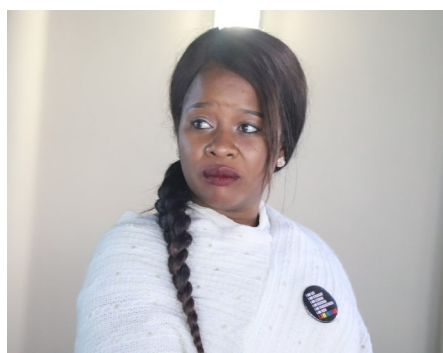
Being transgender means you are a spirit being just like any other human being.

PURPLE - HARMONY:

Transgender people deserve to live in peace and harmony.

A panel of six transmen was interviewed by Bookhalane Sekhonyana regarding their identity as transmen and the challenges they face on a daily basis. Panel-lists' mentioned amongst other things that they are still being treated as women by the general population even though they identify as men. The main challenge is the danger they often find themselves in with regard to being targeted for corrective rape and hate crime. The conclusion and advice amongst themselves was that much as there is a fight and struggle with transphobia, transmen need to continue taking care of themselves by avoiding situations that may end up compromising their safety.

A panel discussion of four transwomen was interviewed by Tebogo Thabana. The topic was *Trans Beauty*. The main question was to define beauty the way they know it and one panellist defined beauty as always having the latest trends and make up. Another panellist explained that as long as you are content and comfortable with how you look, then that is the meaning of beauty. Panellists reiterated that they are proud to be transwomen and that one cannot separate being a transwoman and beauty.



Noluthando Gwedashe. Tholwana e Molemo professional nurse.



Certificate of Appreciation

AWARDED TO



TSELENG MOLOTO

**EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
MARCH 2021**



MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

FIRST THINGS FIRST ACTIVATION

2 & 3 MARCH 2021

Motho Tvet College
Bloemfontein Campus

09:00 - 15:00

Activities:

- COVID-19 screening
- TB & STI screening
- GBV screening
- HIV testing
- PrEP referral

HIGHER HEALTH
Higher Education & Training: Health, Wellbeing and Development Centre

Formerly known as
heads

Tholwana Advocacy

+27 68 251 0132

@Tholwana EMolemo

@Tholwana Advocacy

Tholwana E Molemo

zoom

HIGHER HEALTH
Higher Education & Training: Health, Wellbeing and Development Centre

Formerly known as
heads

LGBTQIA+ SENSITIZATION WITH HIGHER HEALTH

5 MARCH 2021
11:00 - 13:00

FACILITATOR: THOLWANA E MOLEMO
ADVOCACY OFFICER
NOSANA SONDYAZI
Email: thlwanaadvacy@gmail.com

LGBTQIA+ & MSM SUPPORT GROUP

TOPIC: DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

3 MARCH 2021

Thotwana e Molemo
Ladybrand Office
62 Mekong Manyatseng

5:30PM

For More Info 071 931 0139

Responsible services for
LGBTQIA+ & MSM

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Thabana e Molemo

**KEY FOCUS GROUP FOR TEEN TRANS
THABA NCHU**

9 MARCH 2021

14:30

THOTWANA E MOLEMO
THABA NCHU OFFICE
748 Moroka Location- Thaba Nchu

FOR MORE INFO - 068 261 0132

Womandla

— celebrating the power of women —

BOTSHABELO

10 MARCH 2021

10:00 – 13:00

ATAMELANG HALL SECTION A
BOTSHABELO

THEME: **RAINBOW COLOURS**

FOR MORE INFO 074 259 5004

TRANSWOMEN
ONLY

Thobane's Molemo



Wimandla
— celebrating the power of women —
BOTSHABELO

10 MARCH 2021
13:00 – 16:00

ATAMELANG HALL SECTION A
BOTSHABELO

THEME: **RAINBOW COLOURS**
FOR MORE INFO 074 259 5004

**LESBIANS
TRANSMEN
ONLY**

Thobane & Molemo

STAFF WELLNESS

12 & 13 MARCH 2021

AFRICAN FOOTPRINT LODGE

FOR MORE INFO: 074 259 5004

Womandla
 "I DEFINE ME"
THABA NCHU
17 MARCH 2021
13:00 - 16:00
 COMMUNITY HALL ZONE 2
 THABA NCHU
 THEME: **RAINBOW COLOURS**
 FOR MORE INFO 074 259 5004

TRANSWOMEN ONLY

Thaba Nchu



Thohwana e Molemole

MEN & BOYS POTJIEKOS



ALDI
AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN

18 MARCH 2021
14:00 – 16:00



SGELA TAVEN
Morolong Location
THABA NCHU
INFO: 073 852 9874

BRING YOUR MOJITA



TRANS BRING A FRIEND

27 MARCH 2021

BOUDLO LODGE
THABA NCHU

10:00 - 16:00

RSVP - 068 261 0132

TRANS GENDER ONLY

By Invitation Only
TERMS AND CONDITIONS

TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY

MARCH 31ST





Responsible services for
TRANSGENER INDIVIDUALS

"NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US"

