

EMOLEMO QUEER TIMES

Free State Queer Newsletter

ISSUE 6.

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Left to right. Tiisetso Mohlobo (first runner up), Winner Thabiso (Queen B) Ntobo, Daemon Stellenberg (second runner up), 16 June 2021 Youth Day LGBTQIA+ Pride - Beauty Contest Ladybrand.

YOUTH DAY LGBTQIA+ PRIDE & BEAUTY CONTEST

In Ladybrand Arthur Pitso stadium, 16 June 2021, Tholwana e Molemo held a Youth Day LGBTQIA+ Pride event which included a unisex beauty contest. Participants of the beauty contest included gay men and transgender women.

The judges crowned Thabiso (Queen B) Ntobo, with Tiisetso Mohlobo as first runner up, and Daemon Stellenberg as second runner up. The judges were Casper Ramoluoane, Tokelo Mofokeng, Jabulane Tseeke and Milant Nyudu. Winners won gift vouchers.

On the line up were stakeholders from Department of Social Development, pledging support and solidarity to the youth and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Popular members from the local LGBTQIA+ community, entertained the crowd with song and dance. With Brandon Maqaqa giving a heart moving speech about his childhood and life as a gay man.



16 June 2021 Youth Day LGBTQIA+ Pride - Beauty Contest Ladybrand. Judges: Left to right. Casper Ramoluoane, Tokelo Mofokeng, Jabulane Tseeke and Milant Nyudu.

SEX WORKERS STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

Tholwana e Molemo (TEM) invited sex workers to acquire services of all the TEM programs, and to assist TEM to identify clients for each program. Program leaders presented their programs. Professional nurse: Noluthando Gwedashe - TG program. Social worker: Lerato Kholopane VEP program. Advocacy officer: Nosana Sondiayazi MSM program. All TEM services for each program were outlined.

Q & A after each presentation had the sex workers making inquiries which included:

- Sex workers request to be trained on being HTS counsellors. To test their own community.
- Sex workers request to be present at future human rights and documenting human rights violations trainings.

Further comments from sex workers included:

- Sex worker's families don't know what they do for a living. Eg. They say they do people's washing to hide the truth.



- Police don't help them when they are short paid or unpaid by customers.
- Sex workers are arrested for holding condoms.
- Police want sex for favours.
- When sex workers are arrested those on medication miss taking their meds and default if on ARV's.

Final presentation was from Free State civil society sex workers sector and Sisonke Free State coordinator Xoliswa Pampiri. She outlined Sisonke services.

Editor-in-Chief: Mx Nosana Sondiayazi

SPEAK TO A SOCIAL WORKER

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT
FOR **LGBTQIA+** INDIVIDUALS



WhatsApp

+27 74 259 5004



COUNSELLING CAN HELP YOU DEAL WITH ISSUES SUCH AS:

- Difficulty accepting your sexual orientation
- Coping with other people's reactions
- Low self-esteem
- Self-harm
- Suicidal thoughts
- Depression from long-term effects of bullying and discrimination
- Hostility or rejection from family, friends or community
- Fear of violence in public places



What is a support group?

A group of people with common experiences or concerns who provide each other with encouragement, comfort, and advice

Peer knowledge and assistance can enable members to manage and grow from the support they receive through a shared experience or challenge.

Support groups take place every Thursday (Virtual/in person)



@Tholwana EMolemo



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@Tholwana Advocacy

The Benefits of the support group

1. It is free and accessible.
2. It promotes inclusion by creating community while helping people to realise they are not alone.
3. It promotes information sharing.
4. It enables opportunities to learn from others and gain support, encouragement and hope.
5. It can reduce anxiety, stress and in some cases depression.
6. It aims to empower people.
7. It offers the opportunity to develop new connections at times of isolation.
8. It provides a sense of belonging in a safe and comfortable environment.



WHITE RIBBONS FOR MEN

"I PROMISE TO NEVER COMMIT, CONDONE OR REMAIN SILENT ABOUT MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTQIA MEMBERS. FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, I PROMISE TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION IN ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTQIA MEMBERS AND ALL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE."



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GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT HELP

CONTACT:

HOTLINE: 0800 428 428

TOLL FREE: *120*7867#



HAPPY PRIDE MONTH





Responsible services for
LGBTQIA+



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10 Common Signs of Substance Abuse

1. Poor performance at work or school
2. Loss of motivation and lack of energy
3. Social withdrawal and mood swings
4. Change in sleeping and eating habits
5. Risky behaviour
6. Stealing and financial problems
7. A lot of time spent seeking the substance or dealing with it's after effects
8. Deterioration of relationships
9. Neglecting outward appearance
10. Neglecting physical health needs



Responsible services for
LGBTQIA+



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OUR SERVICES



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



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PRIDE COLORS



GAY



BISEXUAL



PANSEXUAL



ASEXUAL



TRANSGENDER



NON-BINARY



POLYSEXUAL



GENDERFLUID



INTERGENDER







Human rights advocates raise concerns over arbitrary arrests of LGBTI persons in Ghana and Uganda

In Uganda, police raided an LGBTI youth shelter and arrested 44 persons, while in Ghana arrested 21 people for allegedly holding an ‘unlawful assembly’ for ‘advocating LGBTQ activities’ at an event in Ho city.

Police suggested the raid in the youth shelter happened as they were informed by locals of an alleged ‘gay wedding’. Among the 44 persons arrested at the shelter, where a party was taking place, 42 of them were charged with violating Covid-19 restrictions. According to reports, they were paraded in front of media, and at least 17 of them were subjected to forced anal examinations. By the time of writing this article, 39 of the 42 persons arrested were denied bail. *(update, Friday 4 June 5:30pm CEST: The magistrates Court has granted bail to ALL the 39 persons that were arrested during the police raid)*

The arrests were part of “a worrying trend of mass arrests of LGBT persons whenever there is a gathering of any kind”, a statement on the shelter’s Facebook page reads. “Impunity continues to escalate as well as acts of torture and violence against LGBT persons.”

As Sexual Minorities Uganda pointed out, “this isn’t the first time the Ugandan Police has used the COVID restrictions to violate and harass LGBTIQ Ugandans. In March 2020, another shelter home was raided, and the Police gave the same reason.”

Concerns were raised at the global level also about the arrests in Ghana, which happened during a paralegal training on the protection of sexual minorities. Several rights groups called the arrests illegal, saying those detained did not have access to legal representation, and that some suffered medical illnesses and needed treatment for trauma. “Article 21 of the Constitution of Ghana grants every Ghanaian the right to freedom of association and assembly”, the Alliance for Equality and Diversity (AfED) pointed out. “It was no attempt to violate the laws of Ghana”.

Activists have lamented a rise in attacks and abuse this year, after authorities and prominent public figures have been increasingly speaking up against our communities since the raid on LGBT+ Rights Ghana’s newly opened community center.

Our communities and allies have come together to raise awareness on the situations in Uganda and Ghana, calling on authorities to release the detainees.



REA LEBOHA INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

Responsible services for
LGBTQIA+

Tholwana e Molemo

11 JUNE 2021

VENUE: MULTI-FUNCTIONAL BOTSHABELO

10:00 – 13:00

FOR MORE INFO 074 259 5004

Children's Rights

You have the right to:



A name and a
nationality
at birth



Family care and
parental care



Basic
Nutrition



Shelter



Basic health
care services



Education



Social
services



Protection

If you feel that your rights are being violated,
please speak to someone you trust such as a parent,
teacher, friend, police officer or family friend.





Name: Katlego Masike
Age: 23 years
Pronoun: He
Gender Identity: Male
Sexual Orientation: Homosexual

Coming Out:

I became open about my sexuality when I was 15 years old and my dad was very accepting and supportive unlike my mother, it was never easy from the start even now it's still difficult.

Please give us a background on your Life:

I am a young individual who is goal driven, I was born in Northern Cape and grew up in Bloemfontein, growing up gay was very difficult because my mother was very hardcore, I was expected to be a boy and fulfill my duties as a boy.

Childhood:

I grew up playing soccer at school.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

Gia Gunn, because she is authentic and is determined. Moreover, she is very passionate about self discovery within the queer community.

How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

By a queer member who works there and lives a few streets away from where I live.

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

I have gained insight and support.

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

MSM are not in the emotional level, meaning they don't share intimate feelings or a relationship, they're just there for sexual pleasure. Gay men share affection, intimacy and romance.

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

Recklessness is one big word for my description.

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

Black girl magic with decency.

How does COVID19 affect your life?

It has affected me both psychologically and financially.

What are your views on online dating?

I don't like online, I actually don't prefer it because I am a very active person and I don't like catfish.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

I wish LGBTQIA+ prosperity, one big love, self discovery, happiness and a great success.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Photo: Katlego Masike



Name: Naledi Mokhasi
Age: 32 years
Pronoun: She
Gender Identity: Female
Sex: Female
Sexual Orientation: Lesbian

Please give us a background on your Life:

I was born and raised in Botshabelo; and I was raised by both parents who did their best for making sure that I am the person I am today. I was born a leader.

Childhood:

My childhood was very difficult and hard because of the discrimination I got at school and home about my sexuality. It hurt me because they called me names like "ndoda ausie", "abuti".... but I always knew that I was different and unique. I wished that they would accept me the way I am, and love me unconditionally.

Coming out:

It was hard. I struggled to come out. I was scared of being judged by my family. Then one day I told my parents about my sexuality; they were furious and angry with me. When they eventually accepted me, they gave me love and care. They now support me all the way.



What does

LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

For me it's a world's for all the LGBTQIA+ family.

Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

Innocent "Inno" Matijane because he advised and inspired some of us; and he's a loving and funny person.

Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

None

How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

I was introduced to Tholwana e Molemo by Gift. She sent me a message and invited me to one of the events.

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

I've gained much knowledge about LGBTQIA+, and mostly I got help. I was having a problem with my womb and scared to go to the clinic. Then I talked with sister Lerato who is a friendly, loving and caring person who helped me. She introduced me to PrEP, I had an HIV test. Now I also know about my womb.

What is the difference between a lesbian and a transman?

The difference between a transman and a lesbian is that transmen are people who's gender does not match with their sex at birth. And lesbians are women who are attracted to other women.

What is the typical lesbian lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

Not being careful of whom we associate ourselves with. And being irresponsible; always being drunk, and next we get raped.

What is the typical transman lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

I've noticed that they are loving, caring people but our community are still in the darkness about them. There is lack of knowledge about transmen.

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

Yes I know my status and encourage others to get tested and know their status too.

How does COVID19 affect your life?

It as affected my life badly. I was struggling financially, and I was always thinking too much and feeling drained.



What are your views on online dating?

It's not safe especially to us LGBTQIA+, we are being killed so it's not good.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

It's to be free. Not living with fear. And acknowledgement from our society and community. Being loved and getting all kinds of support.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Name: Poelo Mokhothu
Age: 22 years
Pronoun: She
Gender Identity: Female
Sex: Female
Sexual Orientation: Homosexual

Please give us a background on your Life:

I was born and bred in Ladybrand to a single mother who did everything to make sure that I had everything I needed.

Childhood:

I have always known that I am different from other girls because my preferences were different from others; and that made me question my identity. I lived a quiet life. I played with both boys and girls.

Coming out:

I didn't specifically come out, everything happened on its own. I received support from myself; this made it easy for me to face discrimination that came from the community.



Tholwana e Molemo

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

Being able to be who you are without fear. And being comfortable with yourself.

Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

Somizi Mhlongo, he's vibrant, strong and very focused about life.

Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

None

How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

By one of the HTS counsellor's.

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

Confidence to be myself and not to be ashamed of who I am and be positive about life.

What is the difference between a lesbian and a transman?

Lesbian is a woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women.

Transman is a man who is assigned female at birth.

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

Yes.

What is the typical lesbian lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

Lesbians themselves discriminate against each other based on their physical appearance.

How does COVID19 affect your life?

Negatively because we have to change our normal life to a new normal.

What are your views on online dating?

Personally it's not for me, it's not safe for LGBTQIA+, because they are targeted and end up being killed.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

My wish for the LGBTQIA+ is to live in a community that is free from stigma and discrimination. And be able to live their lives freely the way they want without being judged.



Photo: Poelo Mokhothu

Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Tholwana e Molemo



Name: Goitsemanang Ntoatsabone
Age: 31 years
Pronoun: He
Gender Identity: Transman
Sex: Assigned Female at Birth
Sexual Orientation: I date women and I love them

Please give us a background on your

Life: Background of my life. Well I grew up differently I may say because I liked what boys liked, and did what boys did.

Childhood: Played soccer not with dolls, did not want to play with other girls. Playing with them was like I was forced to, it was boring.

Coming out: I didn't exactly come out as I was always wearing trousers playing with boys and good at soccer at school. So it was easy for me to just go with the flow and later dated a girl in high school, never said the words to my family " I am gay " it came out naturally. But you know relatives can always be hard on you telling you they want you to get married but that didn't actually bother me until my brother said he wants to be an uncle; I said so where do I fit in that part? He said I must make a child I told him over my dead body.



What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

LGBTQIA pride means our sense of belonging, our identity, our definition. Where we define ourselves without discrimination. It's a celebration to recognize our existence.

Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

David Tlale, because he is independent and worked hard to put his name out there without any fear.

Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

Ellen DeGeneres because she is out and proud, she helps people and she is confident.

How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

I was introduced to Tholwana E Molemo by a peer educator who got my number from my friend, asked to meet and explained what is Tholwana E Molemo and how it works.

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

I gained more knowledge on the meanings of LGBTQIA+ and learned a lot about HIV prevention.

What is the difference between a lesbian and a transman?

A lesbian is a woman who is attracted to other women. A transman is a butch lesbian who identifies themselves as a man and classify as a man

What is the typical lesbian lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

A typical life of a lesbian in my community is a lesbian who always hangs out with boys, plays with boys and do what boys do.

What is the typical transman lifestyle you are aware of in your community?

Transmen in my community, you will mostly find them with wiser people; and at work most of the time someone who builds a family.

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

Yes I know my status, I test regularly.

How does COVID19 affect your life?

Covid19 has affected my life because I cannot do what I did before. I can't go to the park and unwind because usually when I have a lot on my plate I would go there to distress. Simply, Covid19 has cut off our social life badly.

What are your views on online dating?

Online dating to me it's not something I would do, I don't even approve it. I prefer to meet my partner in person for the first time and try my luck. If I get turned down, then I will go and look around.



Photo: Goitsemanang Ntoatsabone

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

I wish LGBTQIA+ community would become one thing not separate, because separation is not a good thing. I think we should work together to fight hate crimes, to fight the killings of the LGBTQIA+ community. I believe together we can do more.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

Name: Kgomotso “Kaystar” Monamodi
Age: 35 years
Pronoun: She
Gender Identity: Female
Sexual Orientation: Homosexual

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?
Celebrating our sexuality without being judged, bringing awareness to the community. Especially those who don't know about the LGBTQI.

How does COVID19 affect your life?
Losing loved ones, most people were retrenched from work, and black owned businesses stopped operating. Our economy went down, so it affected many of us.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?
My wish for the LGBTQIA+ community is seeing everyone living their own lives freely, without any kind of fear. Loving and supporting one another, understanding that life is too short. WE ARE ALL HUMAN.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Name: Mpho Moferi
Age: 23 years
Pronoun: She
Gender Identity: Transwoman
Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?
LGBTQIA means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and PRIDE means identity and celebrating humanity.

How does COVID19 affect your life?
Covid19 affected my life economically and physically.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?
My wish for the LGBTQIA+ is that we could be treated fairly and people should understand that we were born just like they were born.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Name: Mangaka Ntsuso
Age: 36 years
Pronoun: He
Gender Identity: Transgender Male
Sexual Orientation: I'm attracted to women

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?
LGBTQIA+ pride is acknowledging, celebrating, embracing and loving what you've become, with different cultures and backgrounds in one space but most importantly with love as a common factor.

How does COVID19 affect your life?
It affects or must I say affected my life because of not being able to be with loved ones as often. Missing being around people, giving hugs, holding hands, things we didn't even think would matter. And it affects those who put food on the table with piece jobs.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?
My wish is not only for the LGBTQIA+ community but for the entire world, to love and acknowledge our existence; and treat us as equal humans as we deserve. For the world to be a better place.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Name: Leticia Carlos Shuping
Age: 25 years
Pronoun: She
Gender Identity: Female
Sexual Orientation: Lesbian

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?
Pride means to me that is how LGBTI feel about themselves; and how they look and present themselves; to be accepted the way they are. Being bold enough to outstand negativity by coming out and being who they are.

How does COVID19 affect your life?
Covid19 affects my life financially and emotionally, since it does not harm people's health only; it also reaches daily living routines, short working hours, less income, less everything.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community? My wish for the LGBTQIA+ is for more of us to work hard and a lot more on educating people about us; so that many people can know better and not see what they grew up thinking that it's wrong being who we are. My biggest wish is to see us being part of the community and being fruitful for people to understand that we are not bad we are all human.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane



Name: Tumane Michael Lesetla
Age: 34
Pronoun: He/Him
Gender Identity: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay

Please give us a background on your Life:

I was born in Senekal Matwabeng in the Free State. I did my post matric qualification at the Durban University of Technology where I successfully completed my National Diploma in Management. I briefly worked at one of the major banks in Durban until I moved to Bloemfontein in 2008 to work at one of the public TVET colleges in the city, which is where I am still stationed. I continued with my studies at the Central University of Technology where I completed my Post Graduate Certificate in Education, BTEch: Business Administration and pending B.Ed Honors: Education Management.

Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

Childhood:

I was raised by my paternal grandmother, along with my eight cousins and two aunts. My grandmother would insist that she wanted to bring up all her grandchildren herself. Growing up with cousins, whom we knew each other as siblings, was amazingly interesting, challenging at times but most importantly, love was all over that four room asbestos RDP house. My older brother, Mpho (love him to bits and pieces), moved in back with our parents when I started my grade 1. Believe it or not, I grew up being a very shy yet curious child. I have always been blessed enough to be surrounded by people who would feed my curiosity, protect and shield me just enough. One word that comes to my mind as I think of my childhood is CARE. I did ballroom dancing from the age of 6 till my late teenage years.

I also played a bit of tennis in high school. I still swing a racket from time to time.

Coming out

What is that? I was fortunate enough to have been brought up in an environment where there was hardly judgment, openly at least. I am very blessed as I grew up as a child who was taught to own and live my truth. Unlike many people in my LGBTQIA+ community, I never had to sit anyone down and explain who I am or whom I'm attracted to. Though, growing in my sexuality, I have realized that one has to come out to the world every day; be it at school, church, work or any social setting. We don't see heterosexuals going around explaining themselves and having to tiptoe around others about whom they are attracted to.



Tholwana e Molemo

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

LGBTQIA+ Pride means everything to me. There is something remarkable about being around people who understand who you are; people who go through the same struggles as you do; people who want the very same thing as you do, the right to exist.

LGBTQIA+ Pride feels like my personal and spiritual renewal. There is an atmosphere in such a setting that I am yet to compare to any other. I have been to several Prides around the country, the atmosphere never ceases to leave me in astonishment.

Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?

I do not have one in particular; I admire all queer South Africans who are true to who and what they are. It is sad that in 2021 we still have kids that resort to suicide due to fear of societal rejection and inability to get acceptance from the very family that is supposed to love them unconditionally. Hence, I am of the belief that specifically in SA, I admire and respect everyone who fights against any inequality and unjustness of any sort. I am totally for all South Africans who are able to use their different platforms,



Tholwana e Molemo

positions and influences to positively impact the country and the entire African continent at large.

Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

My sentiments are the same as above. I have realized that the international LGBTQIA+ community has much more influence in terms of what happens in the global community. For this I cannot help myself but take my cap off for them.

How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

Through a friend, and I realize that there is more that I need to do in order to get more involved with the organization.

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

I realized how little I actually knew about my own community. This goes to prove just how little informed the society at large is. I love the fact that at every event where Tholwana e Molemo is, they are always giving advice, engaging with the entire community, advocating for the LGBTQIA+ community and handing those invaluable bag of goodies.

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

I have no idea. I personally do not believe in labels. As people we are naturally sexual beings and this is one of the most basic needs that we have as humans. I believe sex is one of the most personal and intimate ways that one has to express oneself. However, when it comes to gay men, it is usually more than just "having sex" there are strong emotions and physical attraction that has to be in play.

Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

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

Yes I do. It is very important for one to keep themselves informed about their HIV status at all times. Gone are those days when HIV was this scary monster that everyone had to run away and hide from.



Photo: Tumane Lesetla

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

Their lifestyle is almost very similar to those of the gay community. Although I have come to realize that the transgender people tend to be a group that gets marginalized the most in the community. To a great extent, they get rejected by members of our own LGBTQIA+ community due to lack of understanding and limited education. This tends to become worse when we look at the community at large.

How does COVID19 affect your life?

COVID19 has brought forth challenges from all aspects of our lives. It challenged family dynamics, friendships, and romantic relationships especially our workspaces. I found myself having to live life as I have known in a way that in a totally strange manner. It made me to get to know myself better than I ever did before. I have been lucky enough that I have personally never tested positive for it or have had any scary COVID19 related symptoms. It has also taught me to not take people and life itself for granted.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

What are your views on online dating?

LOLS, I have never been a big online dater. I've always been so scared of meeting up with strangers for the first time and there are already expectations from both sides. I still believe in love at first sight and meeting up the traditional way. Online dating has vastly evolved from when I was younger. I am particularly scared of it nowadays especially with people in our community becoming prime targets of hate crime, corrective rape and brutal murders.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

To truly have the same right to live as any other person in the world, especially in Africa. To think that most of us are not able to be true to themselves based on judgment of others, whom are mostly driven by self-hatred, misguided belief systems only to hide behind culture and/or religion. I really wish that every member of the LGBTQIA+ community to be able to live their lives to the fullest as it was intended since the beginning of time.



Photo. Tumane Lesetla

Name: Sam Kothle
Age: 38 years
Pronoun: He
Gender Identity: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay Man

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

LGBTQIA+ means a lot to me, and I am part of showing the community that we are visible in the community.

How does COVID19 affect your life? Covid19 has affected me so much especially in terms of my work because I work physically with clients.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

My wish for this community, I just want us to be happy, caring, and loving. Especially to ourselves and the community at large.



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane





Name: Sonnyboy Molebatse
Age: 24 years
Pronoun: He
Gender Identity: Male
Sexual Orientation: Gay Man

Please give us a background on your

Life: I grew up as a 3rd born child of four children at home. All raised by a single mother whom was unemployed. Growing up was not easy for me, as sometimes I felt that my needs were not met as to how my mother was struggling, she had to provide for all of us at the same time with my siblings alone on her own, as a child I had it tough with my sexuality, as I always battled with criticism and hate speech.

Coming out:

Coming out was not easy for me as learners at school would tease me about who I am; and some teachers too. My family also took time to understand and accept me for who I am. But eventually my mother came around to understand; and that's when things started getting better.

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

It means I am allowed to be me without boundaries and regrets, living my life how it best suits me.

Who is your favourite South African queer person and why?
 Somizi Mhlongo Motaung, he lives his life to the best of his ability without regrets. And embraces himself not thinking about what who would say about him.



Interview by: Tebogo Thabana

Who is your favourite international queer person and why?

I have none.

How were you introduced to Tholwana e Molemo?

Trough support groups and community out reach programmes.

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

Knowledge about the queer community and most of all support.

How does COVID19 affect your life?

It doesn't at all.

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

MSM are men who practice sex with other men yet without feelings attached. And gay men are men who have sex with other men with feelings attached. And also get into romantic relationship with them.

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

They are identified by their physical characteristics e.g. gays in their relationship one would play top {husband} and the other plays bottom {wife}, their lives are at risk as they are killed everyday by those who are against them.

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

They are free and live their lives.

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

Yes and yes.

What are your views on online dating?

It's dangerous for you are entertaining someone you don't know; who could possibly be a danger to your life.

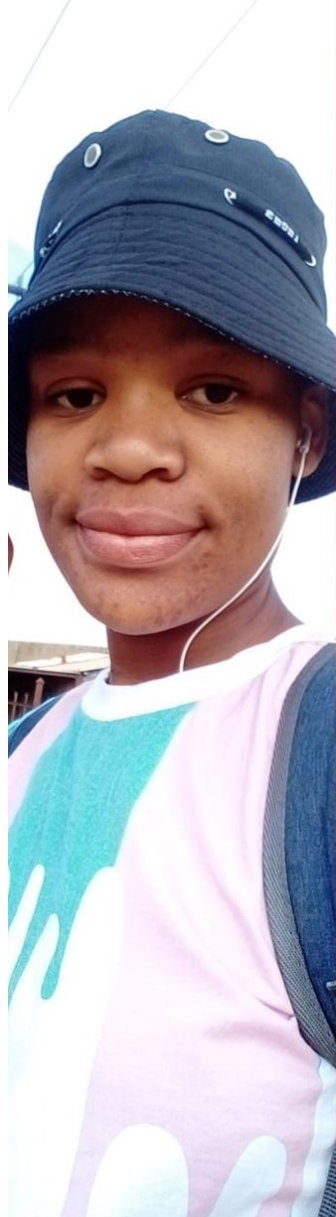


What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

For them to be accepted and treated with respect, be allowed to live their lives freely just like any other people. Because they are also human beings, and have equal rights as others.



Interview by: Tebogo Thabana



Name: Boitumelo Sekhobo

Age: 22 years

Pronoun: She

Gender Identity: Female

Sexual Orientation: Feminine Lesbian

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you? To me it means that it's the same gender attracted to each other. It's a person who is not afraid to tell other people about their sexuality, about the life they live as the LGBTQIA+; and also want people to have knowledge about it. They must treat us like anyone else because we are the same. We go for what we feel or feel comfortable with. This is what I can explain about LGBTQIA+.

How does COVID19 affect your life? Covid19 affected my life in a bad way because I cannot go around anytime I want, I can't go to a place with many people. It's limited my life whereby I must always be at home. We must always sanitize, some days I forget to do that. My mom lost her job even though it was a part time job; but at least she could buy food for us. People lost their jobs others are without payment. We have to test from month to month. *Nna ke tshaba gore nka tla le Covid ka tlung* because we go to school and we touch everything and go back home to our grannies and babies who can be infected easily.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

My wish for the LGBTQIA+ is that I want people to start accepting us. They must love and respect us and stop calling us bad names. They must stop killing us, but instead try to know us. We are doing nothing wrong! They must give themselves some time to think about how we feel, and how we love. And stop saying we are afraid of dicks! HELL NO!!



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane

Tholwana e Molemo

Name: Katlegow Raseipone

Age: 20 years

Pronoun: She

Gender Identity: Transgender woman

Sexual Orientation: I date men

What does LGBTQIA+ Pride mean to you?

It's actually a definition of who we are and how proud we can be as homosexual people. LGBTQIA pride stands against discrimination and abuse to all LGBTQIA+ members.

How does COVID19 affect your life?

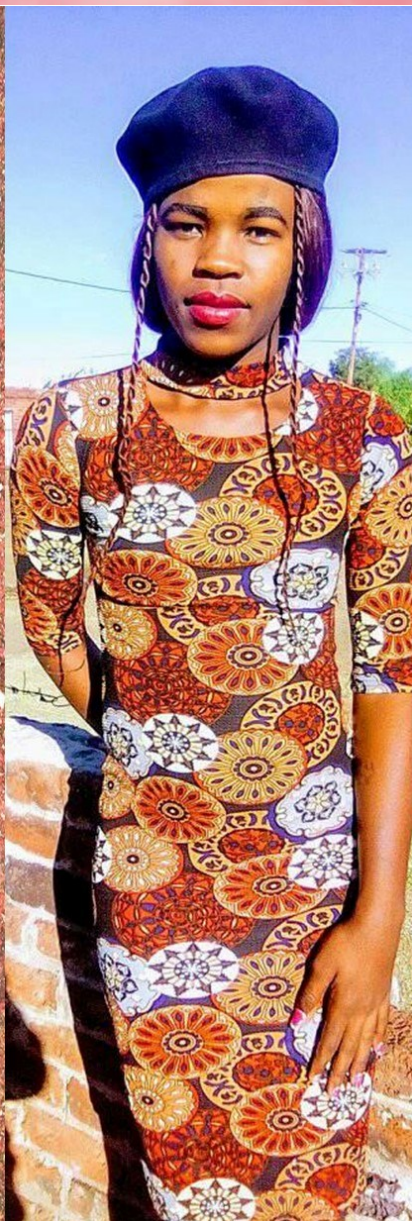
It affected me badly. It tied my hands and feet. People are dying, so many things are happening.

What is your wish for the LGBTQIA+ community?

My wish is for them to come out and be proud of who they are. And they should never give up because of people. **THEY MUST BE STRONG.**



Interview by: Bookholane Sekhonyane





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