

what the
sexual
orientation
is
to
your

you're all by yourself, just remember: singer Ani DiFranco probably felt that way too. And musician Elton John. And tennis star Martina Navratilova. And actor Wilson Cruz. And author Leslie Feinberg. And thousands of other people.

Is it okay to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?

THE SHORT ANSWER: Yes. Being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is as okay and as natural as being straight.

No one knows exactly how human gender identity or sexual orientation — gay or straight — are determined. Most experts think it's a matter of genetics, biology and environment — that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity could be set before birth or as early as two or three years old.

Dr. Richard Pillard, a psychiatrist at Boston University School of Medicine, points out that homosexuality exists "in virtually every animal species that has been exhaustively studied." Homosexuality is as much a part of nature as heterosexuality.

Not only is it as natural, it's as healthy to be gay, lesbian or bisexual as to be straight — no matter what some people might tell you. The American Psychiatric Association declared in 1973 that homosexuality is not a mental disorder

or disease, and the American Psychological Association says that it would be unethical to try to change a person's sexual orientation. Being transgender or gender variant is not a disorder either, although Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID) is still listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association.

Being GLBT is as much a human variation as being left-handed — a person's sexual orientation and gender identity are just another piece of who they are. There is nothing wrong with being GLBT — in fact, there's a lot to celebrate.

What is gender identity? What does transgender mean?

THE SHORT ANSWER: Most people identify as male or female, but for some of us, how we identify and how we feel doesn't match the gender assigned to us at birth.

A person's gender identity is their internal sense of being male or female. Gender expression is how someone presents their gender to the world. We all have a gender identity, and we all have ways of expressing it.

A transgendered person is someone whose gender identity or expression differs from conventional expectations for their physical sex.

ach
they
rical
res

(former FBI agent), Lord Byron (poet), Julius Caesar (Emperor), Margarethe Colette (writer), Aaron Copland (composer), Chief Crazy Horse, George Cukor (film