Growing up with a lesbian or gay parent: Young people's perspectives

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Abstract

Drawing on life story approaches this paper reports on a qualitative content analysis of sixty- seven published accounts in the UK, US and New Zealand of young people and adults reflecting on their experiences of growing up with one or more lesbian or gay parent(s). Responses of the young people to their parent's sexuality were categorised as predominantly positive, neutral, ambivalent and somewhat negative. Young people reported that they had experienced homophobic attitudes and behaviours in one or more of three domains: general and institutional, within the family and from peers friends and other parents. The implications of the analysis for social care and social work practice in the UK context with this group of children and their families are discussed.

Lesbian and gay parents, young people's perspectives, qualitative content analysis, homophobia

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Introduction

This article presents a qualitative content analysis of accounts, published in collected anthologies and magazines, by young people of having a lesbian or gay parent. It draws from life story approaches (Plummer 2001) and seeks to reflect young people's experiences from their own perspectives. It starts with the assumption that young people have rights to be heard and represented within research, policy and practice (Franklin 1995) and that they can provide unique and valuable insights about their lives (Alldred 1998, Lewis & Lindsay 2000). *The article then considers the insights that this analysis may offer to professionals working with these young people and their families, locating this within a discussion of UK policy and legislation.*

Estimates of the number of children in the United States who have a lesbian or gay parent range from one to thirteen million (Stacey and Bilbarz 2001, Martin 1993). The increasing visibility of such families in Western industrialised societies can be understood as part of wider social changes that show the traditional heterosexual family, headed by married parents taking specific and gendered roles, being supplemented by more 'diverse family forms with increasingly fluid and negotiated relationships' (Williams 2004:18). The gay and women's liberation movements have enabled new possibilities of 'doing family' to be envisaged and created (Weeks 2001, Weston 1997). The heterogeneity, in relation to the social differences of gender, 'race' and class of lesbians and gay men has been noted (Patterson & Chan 1997, Fish 2006). Children with lesbian and gay parents also live

in a diversity of family forms and situations. Some children were born to parents in a heterosexual relationship, with their lesbian and gay parent 'coming out' afterwards. Some are conceived by donor insemination and other methods of assisted reproduction. Others are adopted, fostered or raised by other relatives or friends.

Research into the experiences of children with lesbian and gay parents

When lesbian and gay parents first became visible to welfare and public agencies negative beliefs about their fitness to care for children were commonplace (Rights of Women Lesbian Custody Group 1986, Lewin 1993, Patterson 1992 & 2005). These beliefs were articulated through interlinked moral, religious, legal, and political discourses in the context of custody and contact decisions and in debates about adoption and fostering, the availability of assisted reproductive technologies and sex education. These decisions and debates were typically underpinned by assumptions about the desirability of traditional heterosexual and gendered family structures and psychological functioning. For example it was argued that children raised by lesbians and gay men would have distorted gender identity, would become lesbian and gay themselves, would be socially isolated and would suffer psychological harm. Much quantitative research in this area has tested whether these beliefs are well founded (Patterson 2005). Although this body of research has been subject to some methodological criticisms and the difficulties of researching this frequently hidden population have been acknowledged, the overall direction has been consistent: the assertion that such families are innately harmful to children has not been substantiated (Golombok 2000, Patterson 1997 & 2005, Tasker 1999, Tasker and Golombok 1997).

This research has been useful in combating some of the institutional discrimination against lesbian and gay parents. The UK Secretary of State made use of it in replying to a written question about the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which for the first time permitted joint adoption by unmarried (including same sex) couples, refuting the 'possible gender confusion' of children raised by lesbian and gay parents (Smith 2002). However, as this example illustrates, some underlying assumptions have remained unchallenged. Heterosexual parenting has been taken as the norm against which other forms of parenting should be judged and measured. Deviations from 'normal' gender and sexual identities and behaviour have thus been implicitly represented as undesirable. Stacey and Biblarz (2001:176) have argued that defensiveness arising from this has obscured some real differences that have emerged in the research and claim that children of lesbian and gay parents 'appear less traditionally gender-typed and more likely to be open to homoerotic relationships' than children with heterosexual parents; positive characteristics in their view. However, Hicks (2005: 160) asserts that this approach is problematic too. He contends that conceptualising gender and sexual identity as fixed entities fundamentally misunderstands the 'very complex and social constructed sets of ideas' that he believes them to be. He calls for more qualitative, in-depth studies with lesbian and gay parents and their children in order to explore the complexity and variety of lesbian and gay life. This paper is one contribution to the small body of such literature (Lewis 1980, Bozett 1987, O'Connell 1990, Tasker and Golombok 1997, Wright 1998, Paechter, 2000) that is rooted in the young people's perspectives.

Approaches to the research

   As qualitative research my interest was in the perceptions and meanings that the children themselves attributed to their experiences. It draws on feminist (Roberts, Stanley and Wise 1993) and other emancipatory (Robson 2002) research traditions. I attempted to listen to the complex ways in which the young people spoke about their experiences of their parent's sexuality. Central to these approaches is a rejection of the researcher as a neutral being discovering social 'facts'; rather knowledge is seen as changing, contestable and constructed in particular times and places. Such an approach requires us to be reflexive about the personal, emotional, political, pragmatic, ontological and epistemological influences on our sense making processes (Mauthner & Doucet 2003).

   My responses to the stories are undoubtedly influenced by my own experience of being a lesbian parent and of listening to other lesbian and gay parents and their children. I think years of considering these issues practically, emotionally and theoretically are a rich resource to draw on (Wright 1998). However I was aware of some potential drawbacks of being intimately connected with the material: that I might be reluctant to acknowledge young people's painful experiences or negative views towards their lesbian or gay parent as this would be personally threatening or might be misrepresented by those who are hostile to lesbian and gay parenting. Alternatively I might have made unwarranted assumptions about similarities of my daughter's experiences with others. Using a research diary, reflecting with others about the interpretations and looking for negative examples, were all strategies I used to enhance the value of my 'insider status' and diminish the disadvantages of this (Lasala 2000).

Life stories

A life story may be understood as an individual's account of their life that sheds light on their experiences, motivations and actions and that is set in the social world. Plummer (2001) distinguishes between the long life story, a full book length account of one person's life gathered over time, with the short life story, one usually gathered in a single interview and collected in a series. These stories are in the latter category and focus on a particular issue – that of their experiences of having a lesbian or gay parent. They belong to the genre that Plummer names as the 'collective story', a genre that traces its history from slave narratives through to more recent collections of women's, lesbian and gay and other post-colonial lives. These testimonies enable people to give meaning to their lives, to affirm relationships, and to identify and counter oppression (Plummer 2001, Weeks et al 2001). The young people make clear that telling their stories involves acts of interpreting and re-interpreting the present and the past. The published account does not represent the unchanging 'truth' rather a particular version of events that they chose to share and construct with the person listening at that moment.

Methodology

Content analysis describes a group of methods for systematically analysing recorded communication, including transcripts of interviews and published text (Mayring 2000). Qualitative or interpretative content analysis is used to interpret both explicit and latent meanings from texts (Reinharz 1992, Mayring 2000). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) distinguish between three types of qualitative content analysis.

Two of these were used in this analysis: conventional (akin to grounded analysis) where the codes emerge from analysis of the text itself and directed, where the codes are established beforehand through existing theory or prior research. Some initial research questions were drawn from an analysis of relevant literature, personal reflection and discussion with colleagues. *A template was developed that gathered information about the source of the story, the life circumstances of the young person and particular references to positive or negative experiences of family life. This was used to generate themes in a sample of twenty stories. As these emerged, the research questions were refined and a second template to categorise the text was devised. Key categories included emotional and attitudinal responses to their parents' sexuality, their experiences of homophobia and the factors that helped them survive this, the decision about whether to be open their family situation and the impact on the young person's identity. I then further analysed the data in these categories to identify underlying patterns.* Although this proved to be a fruitful method of analysis there was a loss in reducing these rich and often humorous, dramatic or moving accounts, so embedded in contextual meanings, to categories.

The texts analysed consist of four anthologies of stories (Rafkin 1990, Saffron 1996, Hauschild & Rosier 1999, Snow 2004) and *three stories from a special edition including young people's perspectives in a* magazine for lesbian and gay parents and their children (Pink Parents 2003). One anthology was specifically from children with lesbian mothers, another from children who had experienced parental divorce or separation. The accounts were published in the US, the UK and New Zealand. *The texts by Rafkin, Saffron and Snow are recommended by COLAGE, a well-respected*

support and advocacy organisation run by and for those with lesbian and gay

parents, as providing valid representations of their lives.

I chose only to use stories of young people aged 13 and above. Adolescence is understood to be a time of increasing awareness of sexuality and exposure to environments outside of parental control (Coleman and Hendry 1999). Older children and young adults would have had a breadth of experience and time to reflect on this. However this was not intended to discount what younger children had to say.

Sixty-seven accounts were analysed. Of these forty-seven were from young women, twenty from men, fifty-one had a lesbian mother, nineteen a gay father and three had both. Forty-six had experienced parental separation or divorce, thirty-one reported having a significant relationship with a parent's same-sex partner, five that they were adopted or being raised by a non-biological parent and one that he had been conceived by donor insemination.

Many of the young people did not identify themselves in terms of ethnicity and 'race'. *I suspect that many of these were white, adopting alongside many other white people, an unquestioned assumption of the normality of being white.* Four described themselves as being Black or African American and nine as having a mixed heritage, including bi-racial Black and white, Black/Greek, Hispanic/white, Chinese/white, Japanese/Irish and Maori/white. Most did not state their religious affiliation, though a significant number of the young people described themselves as Christian or as coming from a Christian background, even if they themselves were no longer practising. Two indicated they were Jewish, none that they were from another faith background.

There are strengths of and limitations to using these life stories. By choosing to analyse accounts that had already been published I was able to access the *varied* experiences of young people from a *diverse* range of family circumstances, backgrounds, and geographical locations. The ethical difficulties connected with interviewing children and young people were minimised as their stories were already in the public domain. These young people had already chosen to speak about their experiences and I felt that I was honouring their choice to do so. *By using these sources I was also able to draw on contacts and forms of knowledge generated by activists, practitioners and writers working with - and within - lesbian and gay communities.*

However it was not always possible to ascertain from these stories how the young people were recruited, the interviews conducted and their stories written up. They may not be representative of all young people with a lesbian or gay parent. Fish (2006) examines the formidable difficulties of carrying out probability sampling with lesbian and gay populations. Little is known about the characteristics of children with lesbian and gay parents as a whole. In some crude ways my sample does reflect US findings that suggest lesbian women are twice as likely as gay men to have children and US and UK findings that between 10 - 14% of same sex-couples were from black or ethnic minority backgrounds (Fish 2006). These young people have elected to tell their stories and I do not know how this or other factors will have influenced what they had to say. Nonetheless recognising that these accounts may be partial does not invalidate them (Hicks 2005).

The young people's responses to their lesbian and gay parents' sexuality

These were assigned to one of four categories: predominantly positive (thirty-one accounts), neutral (six), ambivalent (twenty-seven) and somewhat negative (three). The young people themselves distinguished their views about their parents' behaviour from their views about their parents' sexuality. For example Carla described how she had been 'hurt by my mother not because she was a lesbian, but because she loved me, and herself, so badly'. Stories were also distinguished by their length, complexity and how far the young person's responses had changed over time.

The young people in the predominately positive group reported generally positive responses to their lesbian or gay parent, to their upbringing and to their parent's sexuality. Mostly they did not express adverse reactions on learning about their parent's sexuality and, if they did, these were short lived. Although almost all of the young people identified that others' negative reactions were sometimes a problem this did not lead to major struggles or unhappiness. Fiona put it like this: 'I understood deep inside he was gay and I totally accepted it. The disadvantage is that others don't accept it.'

Many of these young people expressed respect for their lesbian or gay parent. *Lydia says about her father: 'I think that being a gay man is what made him so incredibly wonderful.'* Some admired their courage in surviving anti-lesbian and gay prejudice. *Randi describes how 'growing up with my mother's openness about her lesbian lifestyle has encouraged me to become an open, honest and broad-minded person.* Others felt their parents had an enhanced ability to empathise with others, including their children. This resonates with Tasker and Golombok's (1997) findings that over one third of the young people they interviewed expressed pride in their lesbian mother. Many found their parents easy to talk to, sometimes like Rosie,

comparing their families favourably to straight families that seemed 'repressed, not able to talk to each other'. Others, particularly those who had been raised always knowing about their parents' sexuality, were puzzled by other people's lack of familiarity with or antagonism to what was, for them, a normal family situation.

Some felt that their notions of family were different to children from heterosexual families and had gained extra parent(s) through their parents' lesbian and gay relationships. Many of the young people in this group expressed positive attitudes towards the lesbian and gay communities they had grown up in: they valued having an extended group of carers, found the lesbian and gay culture they had experienced to be fun, and appreciated the radical perspectives they had been exposed to. *What Adam valued most was 'the exposure to different types of people.'*

Although some people in this group did report painful experiences within their family that arose from their parent's disclosure – for example their parents' divorce – because this had been handled well it did not leave them with lasting feelings of distress. Lydia described how she had learned from her mother that loving her (gay) father meant 'letting people be who they are, letting them go, even if that involves loss.'

The 'neutral' accounts were characterised by phrases such as 'it didn't bother me'. Their accounts were brief. They were distinguished from the first group in that they did not identify positive advantages of being raised by a lesbian or gay parent but neither did they identify disadvantages. These young people saw their parent's sexuality as not affecting them strongly; it was their parent's business and had had little impact on their life.

The 'ambivalent' young people expressed contradictory feelings. Typically they represented their story as a journey with their reactions changing over time. Generally their accounts were longer; many gave the impression that they had struggled with some difficult issues throughout their life. They described a range of complex family situations. Like the predominantly positive group the ambivalent group identified many positive features of the care they received from their lesbian and gay parent, however these were combined with feelings of anger or distress that lasted some time.

Many young people described the characteristic emotional reactions to loss and change that have been identified in the literature (Marris 1991, Sugarman 1986). This was particularly true when the parent's disclosure had heralded an announcement that their parents were separating.

Renee describes her reaction to her mother's disclosure like this: 'I told her it wasn't normal. I felt angry, but I was more shocked; I just had a hard time believing it. I thought that maybe it was a phase and that it would pass. Then I thought, "Now I won't be normal".'

For some the level of anti-lesbian and gay prejudice they had experienced was so devastating or extreme, that despite positive feelings toward their parents, negative experiences dominated their narratives. For those who had always been raised with lesbian or gay people, the gradual realisation that the rest of the world did not perceive their families in a positive way was distressing. Carey recounts how at one point in her life she began rebelling against her mother, *'like many teenagers do – but in another way as well. I began rejecting her identity as a lesbian – I wanted nothing to do with it.'*

Some identified ambivalent feelings about the lesbian or gay communities they knew. As well as the positive features identified by the first group they identified some negative ones. A few boys reported that they had heard unpleasant comments from some lesbians about their sex or felt excluded from some parts of the lesbian community. Some girls identified a contradiction in their upbringing; on the one hand they were being raised to challenge societal norms but within the lesbian feminist community there seemed to be other norms, which were also difficult to challenge. *Erin felt that: 'lately he (his dad) only wants to talk about gay stuff and he's been a little self-absorbed.'*

Of the three that were categorised as somewhat negative none identified positive advantages of being raised by lesbians or gay men and the young people focused on the difficulties that their parent's choices and behaviours had made for them. Two felt critical of their mother for having chosen an unstable and at times abusive partner. Another described a very neglectful mother who was unavailable to him emotionally and physically. Hence he was left vulnerable to abuse by (heterosexual) men. His was the only account (of all 67) that spoke negatively of meeting other children who had a lesbian or gay parent. However none of this group condemned their parents' sexuality per se. As Michael puts it: *'Though my mother was a lesbian, her lesbianism had nothing to do with the way she raised me. She wasn't there for me when I needed discipline or parental support … lesbianism was the excuse … but not the cause.'*

Experiences of prejudice and negative treatment

What came over most strongly in the young people's accounts was that they identified that the problems they experienced with having a lesbian or gay parent arose almost entirely from other people's negative views about lesbian and gay people. Fifty-nine young people gave instances in one or more of three domains: the general or institutional, the family, and peers or friends. Only four young people stated that homophobic attitudes had not been a significant problem for them.

The general or institutional domain refers to the young people's experiences of living in a society where derogatory attitudes or institutional discrimination towards lesbian and gay people was routine. *As Chris puts it 'no matter how okay you are with it, here's always going to be someone who will dislike you because of it'*. Wright (1998), drawing an analogy with work by McAdoo (1997) on the stress faced by black families from racism, describes this as 'extreme mundane' stress from living in a heterosexual supremacist environment. Sometimes this stress involved particular incidents: receiving threatening phone calls, being thrown out of public places, being removed against their will from their lesbian or gay parent's care, their relationship with a lesbian or gay parent being obstructed or invalidated, or their parent losing their job. Frequently it arose from the widespread use of words associated with lesbian and gay sexuality as an insult, homophobic jokes, disparaging comments about individuals and from general anti-lesbian and gay sentiments voiced in the media and in the environments they lived in. Others experienced acute anxieties for the welfare of their parents, fearing that they might be victims of violence or other forms of homophobic prejudice such as losing their job. Others felt awkward about explaining their family circumstances and feared

other people's anticipated – and sometimes real - hostile, embarrassed or confused reactions.

Several young people gave instances of where judges and court welfare officers made judgments based on homophobic stereotypes. Lewin (1993) reports how lesbian mothers often used strategies of appeasement in relation to their ex-partners: for example by not applying for financial support, not challenging unacceptable behaviour or by hiding their sexuality. This was present in many of these young people's accounts. Although the young people sometimes had positive experiences of welfare professionals others had negative ones, for instance one disabled young person spoke of how his school 'helper' told him that lesbians were disgusting. Another spoke about how his social worker had presumed that his difficulties related to his lesbian parents not to the abuse he had experienced from his stepfather.

For some the hardest thing they had to contend with was their parent's own internalised homophobia. The stress of having to live with secrecy or being 'protected' from the truth was experienced as profoundly damaging. *For one young man this lasted up until his father's death. "My father, I'm 90% certain, died of an AIDs-related illness …He couldn't even be honest about what he eventually died of."*

Many young people reported homophobic behaviours from a heterosexual parent, step- parent or other member of their extended family. These included rejection, unpleasant comments, the use of religion as a weapon, and actual or threatened use of the court welfare system to limit contact or challenge custody. Frequently they occurred in the context of a custody or contact dispute. One described her father trying to snatch her and the consequent devastating effects on her own and her

mother's sense of security. *Michael reported that: "My mother would say, "Of course you can love your father, even though he is a sinner and will go to hell." As I look back I think that the message messed me up more than my dad being gay."*

Many children of divorced parents have to negotiate hostility, blame and anger. However in these situations their parents used the power they had from being heterosexual. What the young people seemed to be saying was that the pain of living with conflict between parents and within the extended family was intensified by homophobia. The young people identified that this was damaging both to their relationship with the lesbian and gay parent and, ultimately, with their heterosexual parent.

Nearly half of the young people said that they had heard homophobic comments or experienced homophobic abuse, either verbal or physical, from other children at school or, occasionally, from other parents. As in Bozett (1987) and the Lesbian Mother's Group (1989) many young people tried to avoid other children finding out about their parent's sexuality. If this did happen some did lose friends or found that friends betrayed their confidence, and this was particularly painful when it happened, however others found that friends did not reject them. In some instances the young person himself or herself was also called 'fag' or a 'lezzy' or was accused of having AIDS. Some believed that if they were seen to 'stick up' for lesbian or gay people this would arouse suspicion. This prevented alliances being made between children of lesbian and gay people and young lesbian and gay people. A few described serious physical abuse and other forms of physical harassment from peers. Like Garner (2005), young people sometimes spoke about not telling their parents about the abuse they were experiencing, one said 'I learnt that people could and would be

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cruel. I had to learn to protect my mother and myself from the harsh reality of the world's prejudice'.

Summary

These findings both converge and diverge with previous research. They converge in the conclusion that children themselves do not feel they are damaged by having a lesbian or gay parent. Although they speak of many different experiences and different responses, both positive and negative, fundamentally what these young people communicated was that a parent's sexuality does not determine parenting ability. Even Michael who reported much continuing anger and distress at the enduring consequences of the poor parenting he received did not attribute this directly to his mother's sexuality.

However this study converges from much quantitative literature in the emphasis that the young people put on experiences of homophobia, as in Wright (1998). As I argued earlier, many such studies have compared children with a lesbian and gay parent with children with heterosexual parents. Their starting point was not the perspective of the young people themselves. This inevitably meant that experiences specific to children with a lesbian and gay parent were unlikely to emerge. Researchers conceptualised the discriminatory experiences described by these young people as 'bullying'. However there are two main difficulties with this. Firstly, the notion of bullying does not fully encompass the range of different experiences in the different domains that these young people described. Secondly, it suggests that the problem is located on an individual level, not in social, cultural and institutional attitudes and behaviours. For example, when Tasker and Golombok (1997:150)

conclude that 'fear of peer group stigmatisation and the experience of being bullied or teased are central elements in how children feel about growing up in lesbian mother family', they do not consider the homophobic environment that creates these fears.

Two situations made it particularly difficult for the young people to manage living in a homophobic environment. Firstly, when a heterosexual parent used homophobia to attack the lesbian or gay parent and secondly, as in Lewis (1980) and the Lesbian Mothers' Group (1989), when the young person was isolated from others in a similar situation. The study lends support to the view that children are best able to deal with homophobia or negative reactions from others when their parents are open with them about their sexuality (Lott- Whitehead & Tulley, 1992, Patterson 1992). Though responses were not always negative the young people were also clear that they want to decide when and how information about their family life is made public. Many reported that when support from adults was available and they knew other children in the same situation they were more able to deal with negative experiences.

Implications for practice in the UK

These children's accounts come from the US, New Zealand as well as the UK. While there are undoubtedly local and national differences between children's experiences in these different countries some clear over-arching themes emerged in the analysis. Except for Brown's (1998) classic social work text on working with lesbians and gay men the needs of this group of children have rarely been addressed in the *British* social work and social care literature. For example, a recent text

(Featherstone 2004) on family support from a feminist perspective does not acknowledge their existence. Firstly child welfare agencies need to identify children with lesbian and gay parents that are using their services and to evaluate the appropriateness of these services. In developing non-stigmatising services the complexities of children and young people's decision making around being open about their family situation needs to be sensitively acknowledged. This study points to the need for practitioners to understand the varied responses that young people have to their lesbian and gay parents and the factors that interact to influence this. It is vital to appreciate the profoundly harmful effects that homophobic discrimination can have on children and young people raised in such families. It is, however, important not to assume that any difficulties that children are experiencing must be related to their parent's sexuality. Young people and their lesbian and gay parents have developed strategies and resources to support each other (Saffron 1996, Wright 1998); services can usefully learn from and build on these. *Our assessments and interventions need to challenge heteronormative assumptions; these children frequently describe relationships that demonstrate the transformation of intimacies (Giddens 1992) in post-familial families (Beck-Gernstein 1998) scholars have discussed.*

In England and Wales, as part of the changes in Children's Services brought about across the UK in the Children Act 2004, the initiative "Every Child Matters" aims to promote an integrated response of all agencies providing services to children and their families. Two key desired outcomes of this initiative are helping children and young people to 'stay safe' and 'enjoy and achieve'. The views of children young people are intended to be central to this. This research suggests that

unless homophobic practices in institutions, families and communities are combated we are not supporting children and young people with a lesbian and gay parent to achieve these outcomes. The new Safeguarding Boards (statutory multi-disciplinary bodies charged with responsibilities for protecting children) have a real opportunity to create holistic responses to all forms of mistreatment of children based on discrimination.

Concluding thoughts

Three landmark pieces of legislation in the UK have brought recognition to lesbian and gay people and their families: the civil partnership legislation (2005) that confers similar rights and responsibilities of marriage to lesbian and gay people, the Adoption and Children Act (2002 and 2007 in Scotland) and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 that outlaws sexual orientation discrimination in the provision of goods and services. Increasingly courts have been persuaded that beliefs in the unsuitability of lesbian and gay people to be parents are not borne out by the research evidence. These changes have undoubtedly made families with lesbian and gay parents more visible. It could be argued that this increasingly liberal policy framework in the UK means that we no longer need be concerned about children with lesbian and gay parents experiencing homophobic discrimination. However a number of ethnographic studies about life in UK schools (Nayak and Kehily 1997, Ali 2003, Renold 2005) paint a grim picture of routine homophobia in the children's cultures they studied. Young people themselves tell us of the importance of challenging the homophobia they experience and supporting

policy changes that recognise and support their families. Only by doing so will we

help remove the barriers they face to 'staying safe' and 'enjoying and achieving'.

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