



“Living The Rainbow”:  
interweaving  
religious, cultural, sexual and gender  
diversity



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# AGMC: an Example of Multiplicity, Intermixture, Inclusion and Justice

<http://www.agmc.org.au/>

*"Living and Loving in Diversity"*

The Australian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender,  
Intersex & Queer Multicultural Council:

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Jewish  
Diverse Muslim  
Italian  
Greek  
Diverse Asian  
Diverse Arabic  
Diverse African



And the Committee is: accountants, academics, grassroots activists, in health  
policy and practice, community leaders, lawyers, administrative assistants



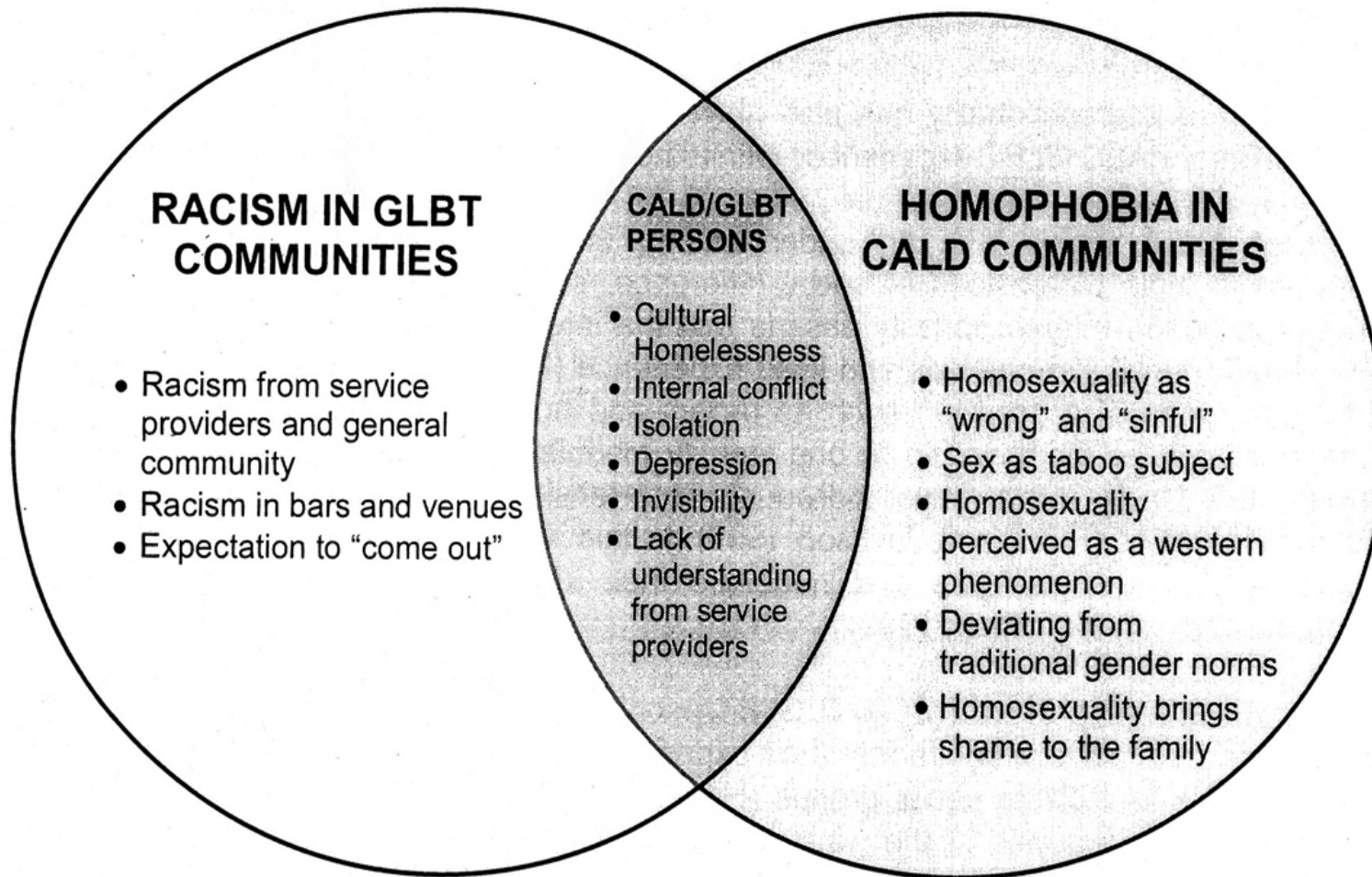
# Being Multicultural Multifaith Multisexual

1. Developing/constructing healthy sexual, cultural, and gender identities (multiple selves)
2. Resolving/managing/negotiating conflicts that may arise in belonging to a cultural/home community, a queer community, several other communities, and the wider Australian society (multiple lifeworlds)
3. Resisting and challenging stigma and discrimination coming from the interconnections of homophobia, racism and sexism (multiple marginalities)





**Figure 1: Issues Arising from the Intersection of Racism and Homophobia**





# Contextualization, not Fossilisation of Cultures

1. Understanding Context: definitions and identities are in constant processes of shifting and fluxing over time, place and space rather than static

2. What other factors come into play?

processes of migration,

fear of community stigma,

homosexuality as Western "sin", "sickness", "crime".

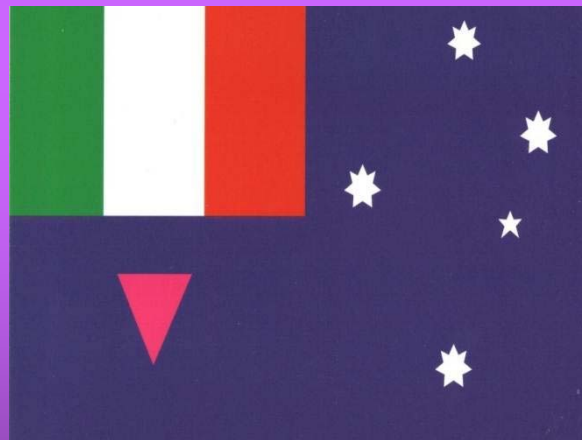


3. Colonialism and Christianisation = erasure of pre-colonial and pre-Christian sexual and gender diversities



Is it the Culture or the Religion?  
Is it the Culture or Poverty?  
Is it the Culture or Lack of Education?

Is it Spirituality or Man-Made Dogma and Interpretation?



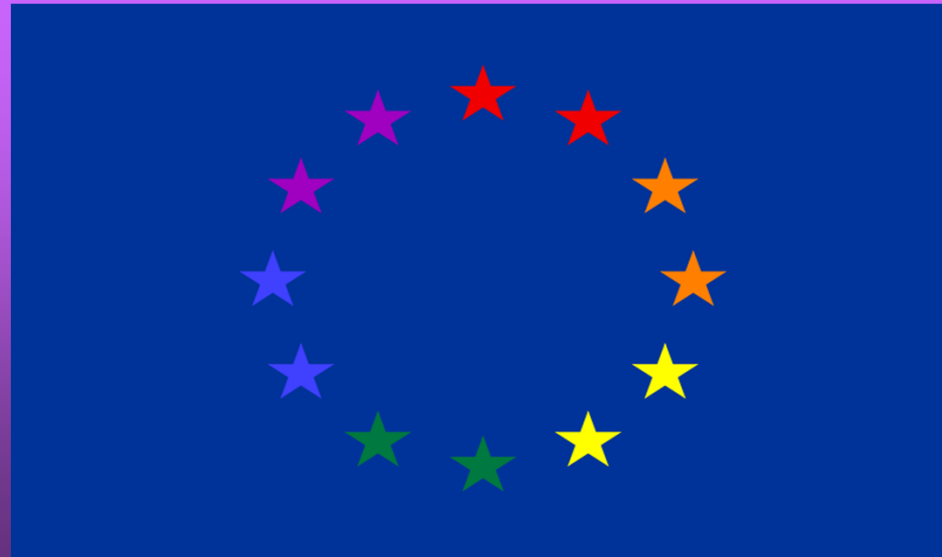
Who are the gatekeepers of the community?

Where are alternative views?



## ➤ Interweaving of Categories:

drawing attention to the relationships between various conditions and constructs such as ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, geographical location and education





## Multiculturalism and religious freedom/exemptions deny multisexual lives and perpetuate heteronormativity and gendernormativity

1. the focus on cultural/religious heritage and the maintenance of cultural/religious tradition has been used to hide, ignore and perpetuate the heteronormative and gendernormative injustices, hierarchies and prejudices inherent within those traditions.
2. the focus on establishing and developing one's own culture/faith, producing cultural narratives, texts and spaces for ourselves, may be perpetuating insularity and apathy in regard to the responsibility each community has to engage politically and socially in the issues facing Australia and the world via "ethnic chauvinism" and/or religious chauvinism.
3. the whole notion of authenticity, of the authentic religious migrant/refugee experience, is one that comes to us constructed by hegemonic gatekeeper voices; and so, what one has to tease out is what is not there, who is not represented; the internal divisions and hierarchies: "community is not always home".





# "The Ethnic Excuse": Dealing With Resistance

- "We've got enough to handle with racism and sexism in our organisation. This is too much."
- "This is a moral issue that our religious families will object to".
- "Our ethnic and migrant families will be offended as it's contrary to their cultural heritage and maintenance of cultural traditions that as a multicultural organisation we are committed to."
- "We won't get staff consensus on this one".
- "Parents/community leaders will complain".



**The AGMC Inc promotes, enhances and enables the health and wellbeing of culturally diverse GLBTIQ individuals/groups within an Australian context.**



- Promotes, enables and disseminates knowledge on issues relevant to GLBTIQ multicultural individuals and groups through discussion, research, publishing and other means.**
- Encourages and supports the formation and growth of GLBTIQ multicultural groups .**



The AGMC Inc does this by

initiating/auspicing/partnering within and between mainstream, CALD and GLBTIQ services and groups:

- referring individuals and organisations
- \*being a point of contact for individuals who are seeking support,
- \* conducting and/ or supporting research activities
- \* providing assistance for both support and social activities
- \*holding social events like trivia & dance nights, film nights, community forums, eg United We Dance
- \*media and public speakers
- \* Sit on boards to inform policy, program and practive development





# Questions/Strategies to Guide our Understanding and Support of Multicultural Multifaith Multisexual Refugee and Migrant Communities

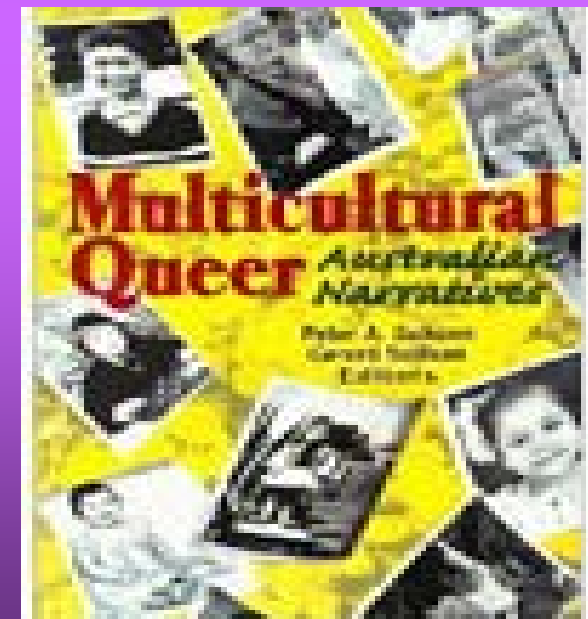
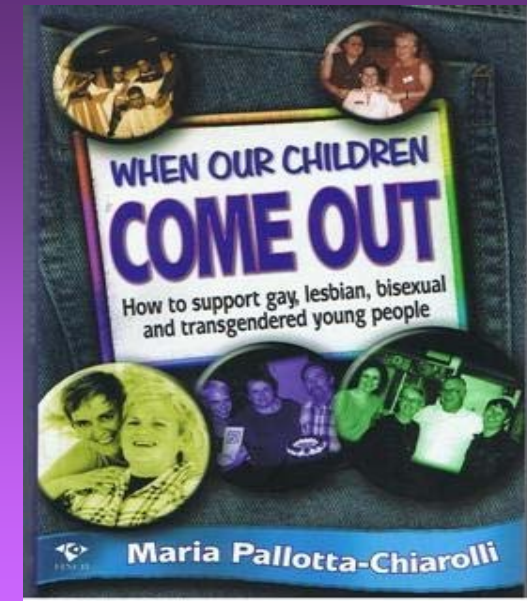
- What is the range of beliefs, values, information, definitions and experiences in our young people's communities?
- Which community workers and religious leaders can act as mediators/facilitators? Are there GLBTIQ role models and mentors out there from various communities?
- Is "coming out" appropriate?
- What will people gain? What will they lose?
- How do we inform young people and their families of their own culture's and religion's sexual histories? What's going on in their own 'home' countries?





What are some common understandings and shared spiritual values we can work with: the importance of family and loving our children; the reality of sexual diversity across all cultures

- Is sexuality the problem? What are some underlying fears and concerns: that their children will end up alone without family to care for them; that their children are doomed to hell; media images of the GLBT community focus on sexual 'promiscuity', drugs and alcohol, affluent white urban party scene





How do we ensure cultural identities survive/thrive alongside pride and celebration of GLBTI identities?



- *Become an individual/group member : you don't have to be "gay or ethnic".*
- *Partner with us*