

Why straight men have sex with men
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Why Some Straight Men Are Romantically or Sexually Attracted to Other Men

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I recently wrote [a blog post](#) about the music video for singer-songwriter Steve Grand's song "All-American Boy," in which a gay man falls in love with a straight man and they share a quick kiss. In that post I addressed why gay men might be attracted to straight men, but that question raises another: Why might a straight man be romantically or sexually attracted to other men? Why did the straight guy in the video kiss the gay guy back, after all?

The following scenario happens many times: A man comes into my office, referred by his own therapist and clutching coming-out literature that the therapist has given him. He explains that his therapist has tried, unsuccessfully, to help him come out as gay or bisexual, but even though he's had sex with other men or gone to gay porn websites, he insists that he isn't gay. He says that he isn't homophobic either; if it turns out that he is indeed gay or bisexual, he'll accept it and move on with his life, but the label just doesn't feel right to him.

During the last three decades, in reaction to prejudiced and

destructive anti-gay attitudes, we've seen the pendulum swing so far in the other direction that it's now become almost a therapeutic credo, not to mention a requirement of political correctness, to assume that men who have sex with men are "in denial" and need help to recognize and accept their "true" homosexual orientation. In fact, neither extreme represents the experience of many men. The truth is that many men who have sex with men aren't gay or even bisexual. Although their mental and emotional state resembles that of the initial stages of coming out, gay and bisexual men go on to develop a gay or a bisexual identity, whereas these men don't.

When I write about straight men who are attracted to or having sex with other men, I receive numerous negative responses, mostly from gay men who have lived in the closet, convincing themselves that they were straight, and may have even had relationships or marriages with women. "You are keeping these men closeted and harming them!" they shout at me. But what these gay men don't realize is that I am not talking about men like *them*. These gay men were suppressing an identity: a sexual and romantic identity of being gay. These are not the men I am addressing here.

In 2008 I started [Straight Guise](#), a website and blog open to all who wish to read, post comments and have a dialogue about men who have sex with men. It explores the many reasons that men have sex with other men, only some of which have anything to do with homosexuality or bisexuality.

Many types of men engage in same-sex relationships, for a variety of reasons, which I will identify for you. Here are a few of them:

Acting out early-childhood sexual abuse: This is also known as "homosexual imprinting." These heterosexual men are not homosexually oriented. They do not sexually desire, nor are they aroused by, other men. However, they compulsively reenact childhood sexual abuse by male

perpetrators through their sexual behaviors with other men. If a basically heterosexual boy is molested by a male relative, he may keep "returning to the scene of the crime" to defuse his emotional pain or desensitize himself to it. When his original trauma gets cleared up, the "homosexual" behavior he's reenacting ceases. This isn't about gayness; it is about sexual abuse.

Sex work or escorting: These heterosexual men voluntarily engage in sexual behavior with other men for the financial reward, but they lack desire for other men and are aroused by the sexual behavior, not by the man. It is widely known in the porn and sex work industries that straight men who have sex with men are paid more than they would be for sex with women.

Seeking intensely arousing but personally shameful experiences (e.g., penetration by a dildo, bondage): These are heterosexual men who are strongly interested in various sexual experiences that many people might label "homosexual." To avoid being identified in this way by women, they seek out men, whom they perceive as nonjudgmental.

First sexual experience: Sometimes heterosexual males experiment with other males sexually, usually in adolescence and/or young adulthood (up to age 25), for the experience or to satisfy curiosity.

Availability/opportunity: These straight men have high sex drives and are sexually aroused easily. They connect with men for physical sexual release, which can be quick and easy and allows them avoid having to emotionally engage.

Father hunger: These are heterosexual men who crave affection and attention from their fathers and seek sex with men as a way of getting that male nurturance and acceptance.

Sexual orientation toward men but emotional/romantic orientation toward women: These are men who are romantically attracted to women and are usually partnered with women. They can be sexual with women they love, but they are predominately aroused and driven sexually by desire for sex with other men.

Narcissism: These are straight men who are self-absorbed and have a constant need for attention and acceptance; they use sexuality with men to be worshipped and adored.

Sexual addiction: "Gay" behavior can be the result of sexual addiction. But even a "cured" sex addict may still feel attracted to men, as do celibate gay priests.

Cuckolding: These straight men enjoy fantasies of -- or the reality of -- their female partners having sex with other men, either in front of them, nearby or with their knowledge about when and where it occurs. They're often sexually aroused by feeling humiliated that their female partners are being pleased by another man whom they see as more potent and better endowed. Other men enjoy being sexual with another man's female partner in front of him, or at least with his knowledge. Sometimes they engage in sexual behavior with the man, but only in the presence of the female partner.

Exhibitionism: These straight men enjoy being looked at by both men and women as long as they are being admired for their bodies. Many are body builders and muscular and enjoy the homoerotic attention of gay men and might even flirt with gay men to encourage more admiration.

Sexual release in prison: These straight men engage in sexual behavior with other men in prison. Their sexual release with another person occurs with men only because men are what's available. Once released from prison, these men no longer engage in sexual behavior with men.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of reasons that some straight men might engage in sexual behavior with other men. In any case, it's crucial to give each man who has sex with men information about homosexuality, bisexuality and the coming-out process, sexual abuse, sexual addiction, family-of-origin issues, and mood disorders that could contribute to the desire to have sex with men. However, it's up to the man himself to decide if his interest in sex with other men is the beginning of the coming-out process, a sign of early sexual abuse, a sexual addiction, or some other form of acting out. It could also just be that once-in-a-while sex with men is something that a man might want and means nothing more than that. As Freud is often said to have remarked, "Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar!"