

Hi my name is Cassie and I'm 17 years old. I truly believe that I am the worlds biggest fag hag - sometimes this is by choice but mostly it is because of my birth! From a young age I had always copped homophobia as I was the only straight person in my family. I have a lesbian mother, a queer brother and a bisexual sister. This lead to people believing I was gay and me questioning my own sexual identity.

I had found it difficult at primary school due to constant taunts and teasing not only by other students but also by some of the teachers that I had (I went to a catholic school where some teachers preached that homosexuality was wrong and people who are gay go to hell). Initially I thought there was nothing wrong with having gay parents and I didn't actually even know what gay was. If anyone asked how my parents were I would say "my mummy and mummy are great". I found it weird when people used the term father as I didn't know what a 'daddy' did in a family. Till this day I still remember the expressions I'd see on people's faces – it was this sort of startled look - the same one that you'd see on the face of someone who had a surprise party :o. After a while when the students found out what gay was and that shocked expression turned to hate.

I was extremely shy and found my self leaning towards early aged depression. At ten years old I was the best at faking a "sicky" and had become very familiar with the library at lunch time... I was really good at playing one player chess.

I did try to get some help from the teachers. At first they ignored me then they would just tell me "I'll sort it out" but nothing would be done. I didn't know any kids from gay families so I felt very isolated from the rest of the world. The situation continued in high school and I started cutting - homophobia being one of the big contributing factors.

I was told there were support groups for young people to do with homosexuality but I was turned away after being told that I wasn't welcome because I was straight. Honestly I didn't know what to do. To make matters worse my parents broke up and I ended up moving to Victoria from Brisbane. It was quite a shock to be in the country but nothing had actually really changed in terms of homophobia.

My social worker ended up telling me about a gay straight alliance group. I still remember my first day the coordinator asked me if I would like do talk to some of the local TAFE students and tell them that I was fourteen years old and what some of my previous experiences had been. This was the first time that I had spoken publicly about my homophobia experiences and I was really nervous. ☹️ 😊 The reaction was amazing - so many people were touched about what I said and I was even congratulated at the end.

Since then I have done various talks for school students to workers and senior members of government and conferences. I have eaten some seriously good food at these events; sometimes my co ordinator wonders if I just do the talks for food!!! I have also helped our group design different merchandise as well as information packs and fliers.

We currently have 10 members in our group - several who are gay and several who are straight. We are currently busy creating a forum for young people to provided extra information as well as a bit of fun for several groups in country areas across Victoria.

I have gotten so much out of this group, the ability to help people as well as myself. I have also learn't other things like giving talks and time management : (me and the co ordinator had a VERRYYYY long talk about punctuality and its challenges and I think I have just about got it down pat but that's another story!). For the first time in my life I feel like I belong somewhere, even if I do turn up late sometimes...

Thanks for listening!