

Dear Alice

There is nothing wrong with being gay. People who say it goes against their culture or religion don't understand. Do not feel ashamed about it.

The first step is to accept who you are. Talk to someone who can help you be more confident. You are not alone. Gay people exist in all societies. If you hide your feelings because you're afraid of other people laughing at you, others probably do the same.

So the second step is to find other gay people. It isn't hard: ask, listen, read newspapers and magazines. Most major cities have gay organisations. Contact them. You'll feel good when you meet people who feel the same as you!

Also, many gays find that their family and friends don't reject them. In private, people often understand and accept. Remember, when you tell people something like this, wait until they're relaxed and practise your 'speech' before to give you confidence. Some pastors are more tolerant than yours. They feel that if God created gays, the church should accept them. So, don't feel so bad.

Good luck with finding someone to love!

Auntie Stella

ACTION POINTS

● **ANSWERS: Gay people quiz**

- 1 and 4 are opinions, 2 and 3 are facts.
- Do you agree with Auntie Stella's reply? Which of your ideas come from actually knowing gay people, and which ideas are from what people around you say?
- Find out which organisations give advice and support to gay people. Ask someone from there to come and talk to your group and answer your questions. You can write questions if you're shy to ask them directly.
- Find out about your country's constitution and laws. For example, does the constitution say that there must be 'no discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation'? This means that gays must be treated like everybody else, by law. For example, a gay person can join the police, be a teacher or a mayor, like anyone else. Have a debate about this.

