

# Homophobia

## What are we Afraid of?

According to the dictionary, Homophobia is the hatred or fear of homosexuals. A phobia is an unreasonable fear.

*Sister* talked to people in the streets of Windhoek, Khomasdal and Katutura to establish how real this hatred or fear in our society is.

Following are some opinions:

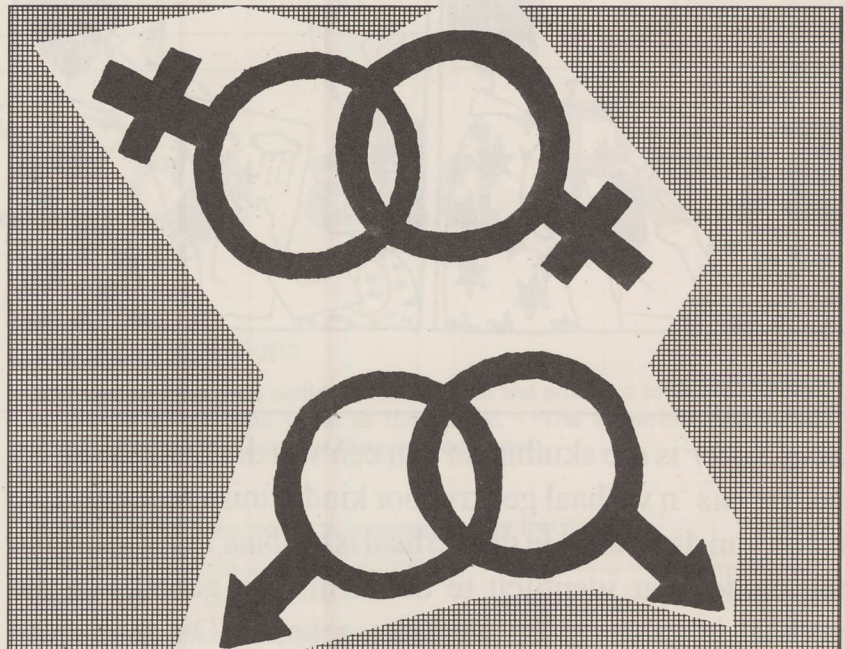
'Oh, those, no, they must have come from another planet. They don't belong here.'

'This thing is not inherent to our black communities. I think it is people who hang around too much with white people.' 'Yeah, some of my best friends are lesbians and gays. I accept them.' 'We are not ready to accept these people. They are a threat to our communities.' 'I feel sorry for them. They must have a lonely life.'

'I am gay and I don't think there is anything wrong with me.' 'Homosexuality is unchristian. There must be something wrong with them.' 'I don't mind them as long as they don't show it in public.'

Per definition a homosexual is a person who cares for, loves, and has a sexual relationship with another person of the same sex. More than often it seems that what really freaks people out is the fact that homosexuals have sexual relationships with another person of the same sex.

As one lesbian said: 'It is as if



these prejudiced people actually want to know what it is like, before they will accept it. They just want to see the sexual part, not the loving and caring.'

'Lesbians and gays in our communities are met with a lot of bigotry. This is one reason we are so dispersed as a group. It is a political issue. We are aware that people scorn us, that they ridicule us, and that they think we are immoral.'

'My mother asked me many years ago after I had told her I had fallen in love with a woman: 'So who is the man in the relationship?' I had to explain that there was no 'man' and 'wife' in the relationship. We were both women and proud of our womanhood.'

Klara (not her real name),

another lesbian expressed the following: 'I am a black Namibian lesbian, and a feminist. Not all feminists are lesbians and not all lesbians are feminists.'

I did not learn how to be a lesbian or a feminist in another country. I have lived in Namibia all my life. It is not something that has been imposed on me. I made my own choices and I am happy with it.'

'I think politicised lesbians and gays, as there are those who are not politicised, have a much greater tolerance towards people who don't accept them for what they are, than the other way around. We are a minority, but we are not ashamed of what we are.'

'We contribute as much to society as anybody else,' she said.