



Phil's Story

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Using this photo-story

This story is written for use by and with men and women with learning difficulties around same sex relationship issues. This may be for men and women who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), or to help other men and women with learning difficulties to think about the issues involved.

The story is based on research called, 'Secret loves, hidden lives? Exploring same sex relationships for people with learning difficulties', carried out by David Abbott and Joyce Howarth at the Norah Fry Research Centre, University of Bristol.

David and Joyce found that often no-one had spoken with people with learning difficulties about being LGB. This frequently made it very hard to tell others about their sexual identity and increased the feeling of isolation. For this reason it's good to use the story for men and women who are 'questioning' their sexual identity, but also to use them with all people with learning difficulties.

If this photo-story is used with a group of people with learning difficulties, think about how to challenge any homophobic remarks or 'jokes' that come up. Prepare for using the story by checking what resources there are locally for LGB people. In the back of 'Gay Times' and 'Diva' (monthly glossy magazines aimed at gay men and lesbians) there are community listings, with details of groups and helplines. There is more information at the back of this story.

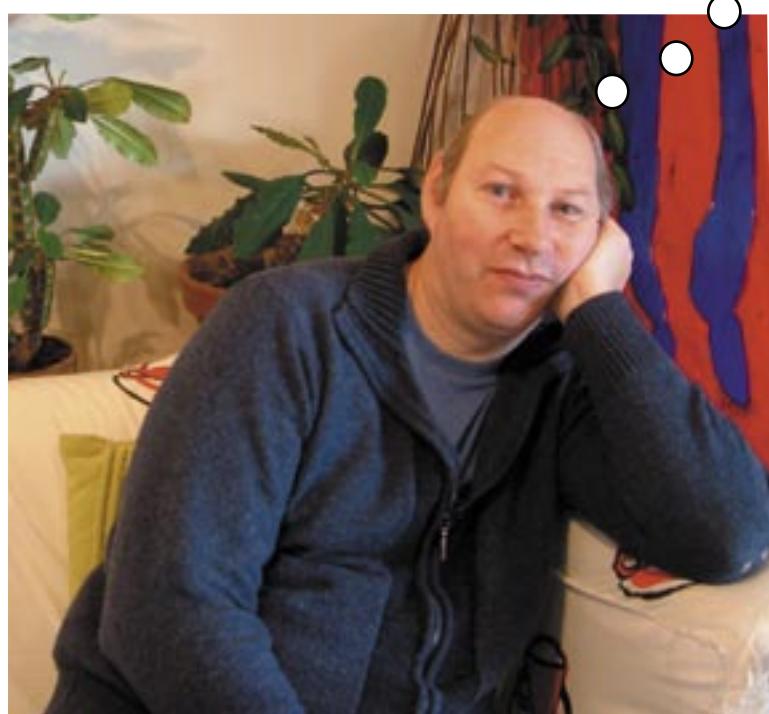


This is Phil.



Phil fancies other men.

Phil is gay.





Phil goes to a day centre.



This is Stuart.

He is a support worker at the day centre.



There is a men's group at the day centre.

They talk about relationships.



Stuart is a support worker running the mens group.

He is showing pictures of couples in relationships.

People like the picture of a man and a woman.



Stuart shows a picture of two men kissing.

Most people look uncomfortable. One person says they don't like the picture.

Phil doesn't say anything.



Phil goes off by himself and feels sad and confused.

He thinks about telling Stuart that he is gay.



Stuart is putting up the pictures of different couples.



Phil watches Stuart.

He asks Stuart if they can talk somewhere private.



Phil and Stuart go to a quiet office.

They sit down.

Phil tells Stuart he's gay.



Stuart is pleased that Phil has told him he's gay.

Phil is happy and relieved he's told Stuart.

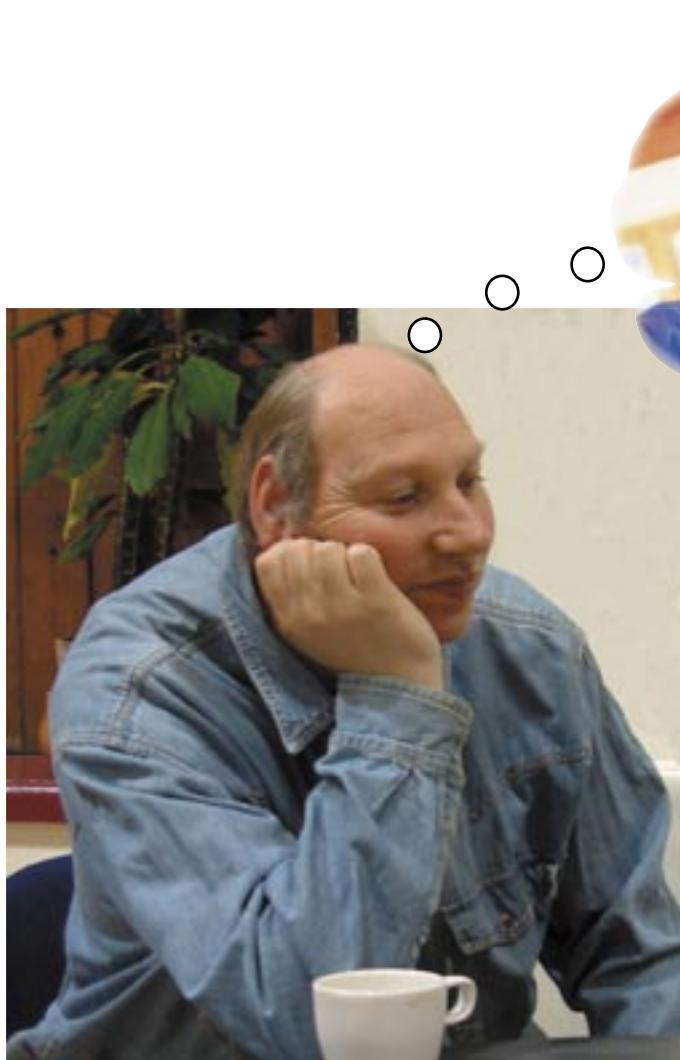
They talk about who else it's alright to tell.



... a week later

Phil and Stuart are meeting to look at Phil's goals and dreams.

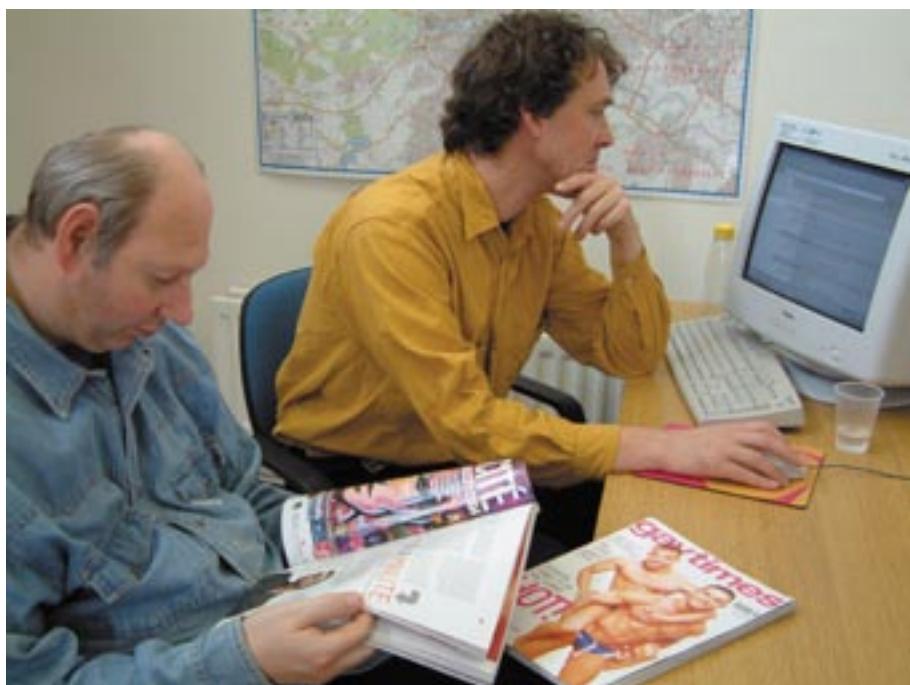
They make a map about Phil's dreams.



Phil wants support to meet other gay men.



Phil wants support
to think about telling
his parents he's
gay.



Stuart goes on
the internet and
Phil looks at 'Gay
Times'.

They try to find out
about gay groups in
their area.



Stuart and Phil find out about a group for gay men.

Phil decides he wants to go.



Phil asks Stuart if he's gay.



Stuart says he's straight – he has a girlfriend.

Stuart says he'd still like to support Phil if that's what Phil wants.



Phil gets on well with Stuart and trusts him.

Phil says yes, he would like Stuart to support him.



Stuart goes to the meeting place with Phil.

Phil goes into the meeting by himself and Stuart agrees to meet him later.



Inside is a group of gay men talking.

They talk about gay pubs and clubs.

Some people like gay pubs and clubs. Some don't.



Someone gives a talk about safer sex.



After the meeting Phil and Stuart go to a pub.

Phil tells Stuart about the meeting. He liked it.



Phil has other things he'd like to do.

Phil would like to go to a gay bar.

He would like to have a boyfriend.

He has lots of dreams for the future.



About this photo-story

Joyce Howarth and David Abbott interviewed 20 men and women with learning difficulties who identified as LGB from across the UK and 71 members of staff in different services. Phil's story is not about any one person who took part in the research. We picked out some of the biggest issues from all of the interviews and put them into one story about an imaginary person called Phil.

The photographs for Phil's story were taken by Jill Rutherford. Actors from the Misfits Theatre Company, Bristol kindly volunteered to be in the pictures. Karen Gyde at Norah Fry did the design and layout of the photo-story. The whole project was funded by the Big Lottery Fund and carried out as a partnership between the Norah Fry Research Centre, University of Bristol, the Terrence Higgins Trust and REGARD.

The full report on this research, '**Secret loves, hidden lives? Exploring issues for people with learning difficulties who are gay, lesbian or bisexual**', by David Abbott and Joyce Howarth is published by The Policy Press and is available from Marston Book Services on  0 1 2 3 5 4 6 5 5 0 0 (£15.99 + £2.75 p&p) email direct.orders@marston.co.uk

A summary and easy to read version of the report are available at www.bristol.ac.uk/norahfry

Norah Fry Research Centre, University of Bristol

 0 1 1 7 3 3 1 0 9 8 7

d.abbott@bristol.ac.uk

Useful organisations

The London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard is open 24 hours a day and has details of other switchboards across the UK,
☎ 0 2 0 7 8 3 7 7 3 2 4 and at www.llgs.org.uk

The Terrence Higgins Trust can give advice and support about HIV and sexual health. The headquarters are in London but they will be able to give you details of the office closest to you, ☎ 0 8 4 5 1 2 2 1 2 0 0 and at www.tht.org.uk

REGARD is the UK association for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender disabled people. They currently offer a penpal and befriending service. Email: regard@dircon.co.uk and see the website at www.regard.org.uk

Stonewall are a campaigning organisation for equal rights for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. They have information on various issues including violence and hate crimes, ‘coming out’, and gay pride events. ☎ 0 2 0 7 8 8 1 9 4 4 0
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www.stonewall.org.uk

