

Survey by



Why Change?

**Survey of Men With Unwanted Same-Sex Attractions (SSA) on
The Factors Motivating Their Desire to Change**

July 2006

People Can Change is an independent, non-profit organization of men who have overcome unwanted homosexual attractions who now help and support other men who seek similar change. People Can Change provides experiential healing retreats, personal coaching, an educational Web site (www.peoplecanchange.com), and online support groups. Contact: Richard Wyler, Executive Director and Life Coach, ben@peoplecanchange.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary and Conclusions.....	3
Methodology	6
Respondent Profile	7
How Potentially Motivating Factors Were Identified For The Questionnaire	10
“What Motivates You to Seek Change?”.....	11
Top Three Motivators for Change.....	14
Any Other Motivations Not Listed?	17
Selected Open-Ended Answers on Motivations to Change	18
Do Motivations Differ Based on Amount of Gay Experience?	23
Outside Pressure or Encouragement	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From January to March 2006, People Can Change surveyed the members of its online support groups, which have a combined total membership of about 1,100 men. Members of these groups are seeking to overcome (or report that they have already overcome) unwanted homosexual feelings. The survey sought to determine what personal factors were motivating their desire to alter their same-sex attractions. A total of 189 usable surveys were completed – a response rate of 17%.

Clearly, the results of this survey are **not relevant to the gay population at large**, particularly not to those who have happily embraced a gay identity and are satisfied and fulfilled living a gay life.

This survey sample was drawn from a distinct population – men who are *dissatisfied* with having same-sex attractions and who *seek to diminish or overcome* those feelings. These are men for whom homosexual feelings feel inauthentic, unsatisfying or wrong.

The majority of the survey consisted of a list of 18 possible factors that some men have identified as motivating their desire to change. The survey asked, **“To what extent, if any, do (or did) each of the following motivate you to seek change?”**

Survey Highlights:

Multiple factors

On average, each respondent identified 14.1 of the 18 factors as contributing to their desire to change – 9.5 as “major” and 4.6 as “somewhat” motivational factors.

Most frequently cited factors motivating a desire to change:

- 1) Desire to heal emotional wounds at the root of my same-sex attractions (SSA) – 91% (a major motivating factor for 77% of respondents)
- 2) Personal values – 90% (major for 68%)
- 3) Expectation of unhappiness in gay life – 90% (major for 63%)
- 4) Spirituality – 87% (major for 68%)
- 5) Desire for nonsexual male friendships – 86% (major for 63%)
- 6) Personal conscience – 86% (major for 63%)

Least frequently cited factors:

- 18) Outside pressure from others – 55% (a major motivating factor for 22% of respondents)
- 17) Fear of disease – 56% (major for 25%)
- 16) Inability (or disbelief in their ability) to find satisfying gay relationships – 56% (major for 30%)
- 15) Fear of rejection – 65% (major for 25%)
- 14) Shame – 73% (major for 41%)

Respondents were then asked to single out the THREE PRIMARY factors from all 18 listed – or any others they might consider. (Remember, the average respondent identified 14.1 out of the 18 factors as either major or somewhat motivational factors.)

Most frequently cited as among “three primary motivators”:

- 1) Spirituality – 44%
- 2) Desire to have (or keep together an existing) marriage and family – 29%
- 3) Religion – 29%
- 4) Personal values – 26%
- 5) Desire for nonsexual male friendships – 25%

Least frequently cited as among “three primary motivators”:

- 19) Other (not included among the 18 factors listed) – 2%
- 18) Outside pressure – 3%
- 17) Fear of disease – 4%
- 16) Expectation of unhappiness in gay life – 6%
- 15) Inability (or disbelief in their ability) to find satisfying gay relationships – 7%
- 14) Depression or dissatisfaction with gay life – 8%

Differences based on amount of reported homosexual experience

- Those who reported “a great deal” of experience were somewhat less likely than those with no experience to be motivated by identity conflict, fear of rejection, and shame...
- ...and somewhat more likely to be motivated by fear of disease, spirituality, depression or dissatisfaction with gay life, or a desire to overcome compulsive or self-destructive sexual behaviors.

Outside pressure or encouragement

The survey asked respondents how much pressure or encouragement they felt either to “go straight” on the one hand or to “come out gay” on the other.

- **74%** reported feeling some level of pressure or encouragement to **reject** homosexuality.
- **54%** reported feeling some level of pressure or encouragement to **accept** homosexuality.

Conclusions:

It may be concluded from this survey that respondents:

- Are motivated to change by a complex multiplicity of factors.
- May be less influenced to change by outside pressure, shame, or fear of rejection than “conventional wisdom” or popular assumptions might suggest.
- Are most influenced to change by such factors as their:
 - personal spirituality,
 - desire to have a family (or keep together an existing marriage and family),
 - religious beliefs,
 - personal values,
 - desire for nonsexual male friendships, and
 - desire to overcome past emotional wounds perceived to be at the root of their homosexual feelings.

Note on Perceived Root Causes of Homosexual Attractions:

In 2004, People Can Change surveyed the members of its online support groups to determine what they perceived to have been the most significant causes of their developing homosexual feelings in their own lives. We asked about 25 possible factors -- everything from biology to personal choice. More than 200 men responded.

The most frequently perceived “root causes” were: 1) Father-son relationship problems, 2) Conflict with male peers, 3) Mother-son relationships (and the “smothering mother” syndrome), 4) Sexual abuse history, 5) Other sexual experience and 6) Personality traits.

See http://www.peoplecanchange.com/Root_Problems.htm and <http://www.peoplecanchange.com/Surveyoncauses.pdf>.

METHODOLOGY

People Can Change conducted this survey electronically using Zoomerang research technology (www.zoomerang.com). Beginning in January 2006, People Can Change sent the survey invitation and a URL link to 16 People Can Change-sponsored online support / discussion groups that have a combined total membership of about 1,100 men. The technology blocked individuals from responding to the survey more than once. The survey was closed on March 27, 2006. Usable responses were received from 189 men, a response rate of 17%.

Members of these People Can Change groups are adult males who either are now, or have been at some point in their past, sexually attracted to other males. To be admitted to any of these groups in the first place, members must affirm to the moderator that they are seeking to diminish unwanted homosexual feelings and/or want to support others who are seeking such change.

The survey instrument consisted of 27 closed-ended questions and four open-ended questions. Primarily, respondents were asked to rate 18 potentially motivating factors that have reportedly influenced some men to seek to alter unwanted same-sex attractions. Also included was an open-ended question about possible other motivating factors not listed in the survey.

Limitations and Caveats

First, it is important to recognize that this survey is a measurement of self-identified motivations for desiring or attempting to alter same-sex attractions among men who wish to do so. It does not “prove,” for instance, that outside pressure from others is in *actuality* the least significant motivation for change; rather, it shows that members of the study group consider this to be the case, for themselves individually. On the other hand, one should not dismiss the “expertise” of the members of this group either. They, more than anyone else, know what does and what does not motivate them to seek change.

Second, it is important to keep in mind that the survey sample was drawn from a group of *men who had already self-identified as being dissatisfied with having same-sex attractions*. These are men for whom homosexual feelings feel inauthentic, unsatisfying or wrong. A very different population – men who gladly and proudly embrace a gay identity and a gay life – certainly would be expected to answer these questions quite differently – presumably expressing little or no desire to change at all, to begin with.

About Terminology: “SSA”

Among men and women who experience unwanted homosexual feelings and hope to diminish them, the phrase “same-sex attraction” or “same-sex attracted” and the acronym SSA typically are much preferred to “gay.” Among this SSA population, the term “gay” is considered a socio-political identity and self-label that these men and women typically reject, often strongly. Also, “SSA” often is preferred as an adjective (“I have SSA feelings”) rather than as a noun to avoid labeling one’s self as “being” SSA. Therefore, the survey questionnaire and this summary report use the terminology widely preferred among this population.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

- Survey respondents consisted of 164 men who said that they **currently** experience some degree of same-sex attraction, plus 30 men (15%) who reported that they had **previously** experienced some degree of same-sex attraction.
- Of the 164 men with SSA feelings currently, all but five said they desired to diminish or overcome their homosexual feelings. The responses of these five men are anomalies among the members of the People Can Change online support groups – groups specifically intended for men who are seeking change themselves, have already experienced a satisfactory degree of change, and/or are offering encouragement and support to those who seek change.
- For the purposes of this analysis, answers from these five respondents who expressed no interest in change have been **excluded** from this survey report.
- For the purposes of this analysis, responses from the 30 men who reported that they previously (but no longer) experienced same sex attractions, have been **included** in this survey report.
 - (The survey instrument clearly stated: *“These questions are written in the present tense. If you have already experienced satisfactory change from same-sex attractions, and no longer struggle with SSA, please answer them as though they were written in the past tense – that is, as was true for you at the time you sought change.”*)
- The total study group summarized in this report, then, is 189 individuals – 159 who currently experience same-sex attractions AND expressed some desire to diminish or overcome them, PLUS the 30 men who reported that they had previously but no longer experienced SSA.

Note on religiosity: While other surveys (Spitzer 2001) and lived experience generally have shown that same-sex-attracted individuals who seek change tend, as a group, to be highly religious or spiritual, the People Can Change community, from which this survey is drawn, seeks to remain largely neutral on matters of religion. The People Can Change online groups specifically caution:

“This is not a religious site. Men of all faiths – or no faith – are welcome. We do not discuss or debate religion, although men are welcome to share their own personal spiritual journeys and what is helpful for them.”

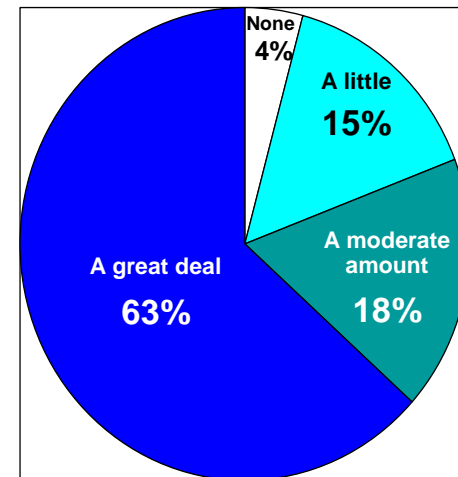
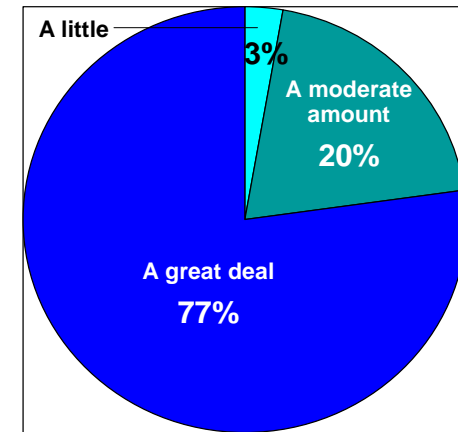
- The survey asked, **“How much desire do you have to diminish or overcome your homosexual feelings, attractions and/or behaviors?”**

The men in the study group responded as follows (see pie chart at right):

- Collectively, however, these men reported being less concerned with developing heterosexual attractions than with simply diminishing homosexual feelings.

When asked, **“How much desire do you have to develop or increase heterosexual attractions?”** they responded as follows (see pie chart at right):

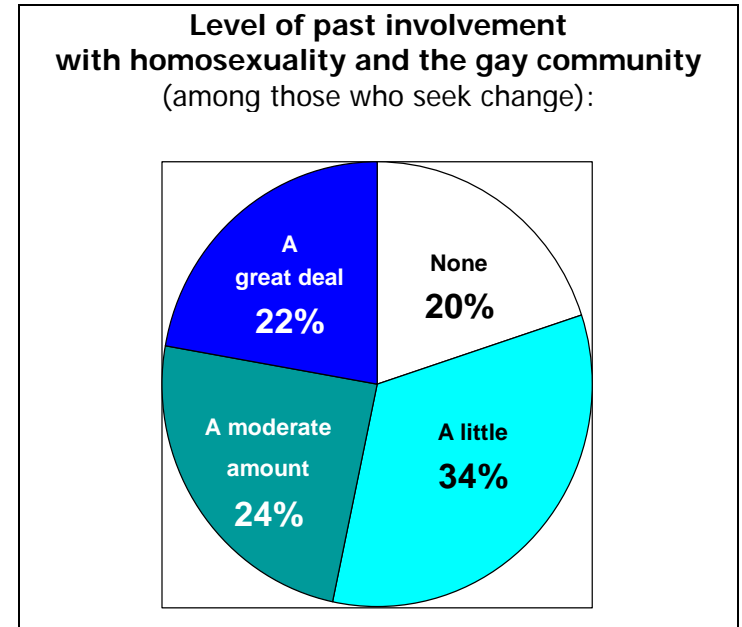
Level of desire to overcome SSA
(among those who seek change)



Level of desire to develop heterosexual attractions
(among those who seek change)

- The survey asked, “**How involved have you been with homosexuality and the gay community?** (In other words, how much **first hand knowledge** do you have of homosexuality, gay culture, or gay life?)”

The men in the study group responded as follows (see pie chart at right):



This particular survey instrument did **not** collect demographic information on the respondents. However, as a reference point, it may be helpful to consider responses from a previous People Can Change survey in June 2004 on perceived root causes of SSA that was sent to essentially the same population. (See <http://www.peoplecanchange.com/Surveyoncauses.pdf>.) That survey found:

- 82% were between 20 and 49 years old, with 32% in their 40s, 27% in their 30s, and 23% in their 20s.
- The majority, 54%, were single, never married, and not in a current relationship. Another 36% were married and living with their wife.
- 80% were from the U.S., 4% from Canada and 2% from other countries within North or South America. Also, 8% were from Asia Pacific countries including India and Australia, and 6% were European.

These statistics seem to reflect the general demographics of the People Can Change online groups.

HOW POTENTIALLY MOTIVATING FACTORS WERE IDENTIFIED FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

The main body of the survey asked respondents to rate 18 potentially motivating factors that have reportedly influenced some men to seek to alter unwanted same-sex attractions. Also included was an open-ended question about possible other motivating factors not listed in the survey.

The motivating factors listed in the survey were drawn from:

- existing factors noted in the literature on sexual orientation change,
- factors identified by Dr. Robert Spitzer of Columbia University in his 2001 study of 200 men and women who reported experiencing sexual orientation change (see <http://www.newdirection.ca/research/spitzer.htm>),
- factors referenced in a June 2004 People Can Change survey on perceived root causes of SSA (see <http://www.peoplecanchange.com/Surveyoncauses.pdf>),
- responses to questions previously posted on the People Can Change online support groups and discussion boards, and
- assumptions made in gay-affirmative public statements speculating on what causes some "gays" to attempt to "go straight."

In Dr. Spitzer's study, the number one motivating factor was that respondents did not find a homosexual life to be emotionally satisfying (81%), closely followed by 79% who said it conflicted with their religious beliefs. Fifty-eight percent said that gay life was an obstacle to their desire either to marry or remain married.

Also, in previous informal surveys on motivations within the People Can Change online groups, the most frequent reasons given for seeking change were:

- "Living as a homosexual felt wrong and conflicted with my moral beliefs or my beliefs about God's will for my life."
- "I felt emotionally unfulfilled in a gay life; it didn't meet my deeper needs."
- "I wanted to one day have a wife and children or wanted to hold together an existing marriage and family."
- "For me, homosexuality was addictive, obsessive or compulsive."
- "I couldn't find "Mr. Right" and stopped believing he existed in the gay world."
- "I feared disease and early death."

“ WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO SEEK CHANGE?”

The main body of the survey asked:

“To what extent, if any, do (or did) each of the following motivate you to seek change?”

Respondents could choose from among four answers:

- This is a **major** motivator of my desire to change
- This is **somewhat** motivating my desire to change
- This is not true for me and / or **not** motivating my desire to change.
- Not sure.

On average, each respondent identified:

- **9.5** of the 18 factors as “**major** motivators” of their desire to change
- **4.6** of the 18 factors as “**somewhat** motivating” their desire to change
- **14.1** of the 18 factors as motivating them (to **any** degree) to seek change

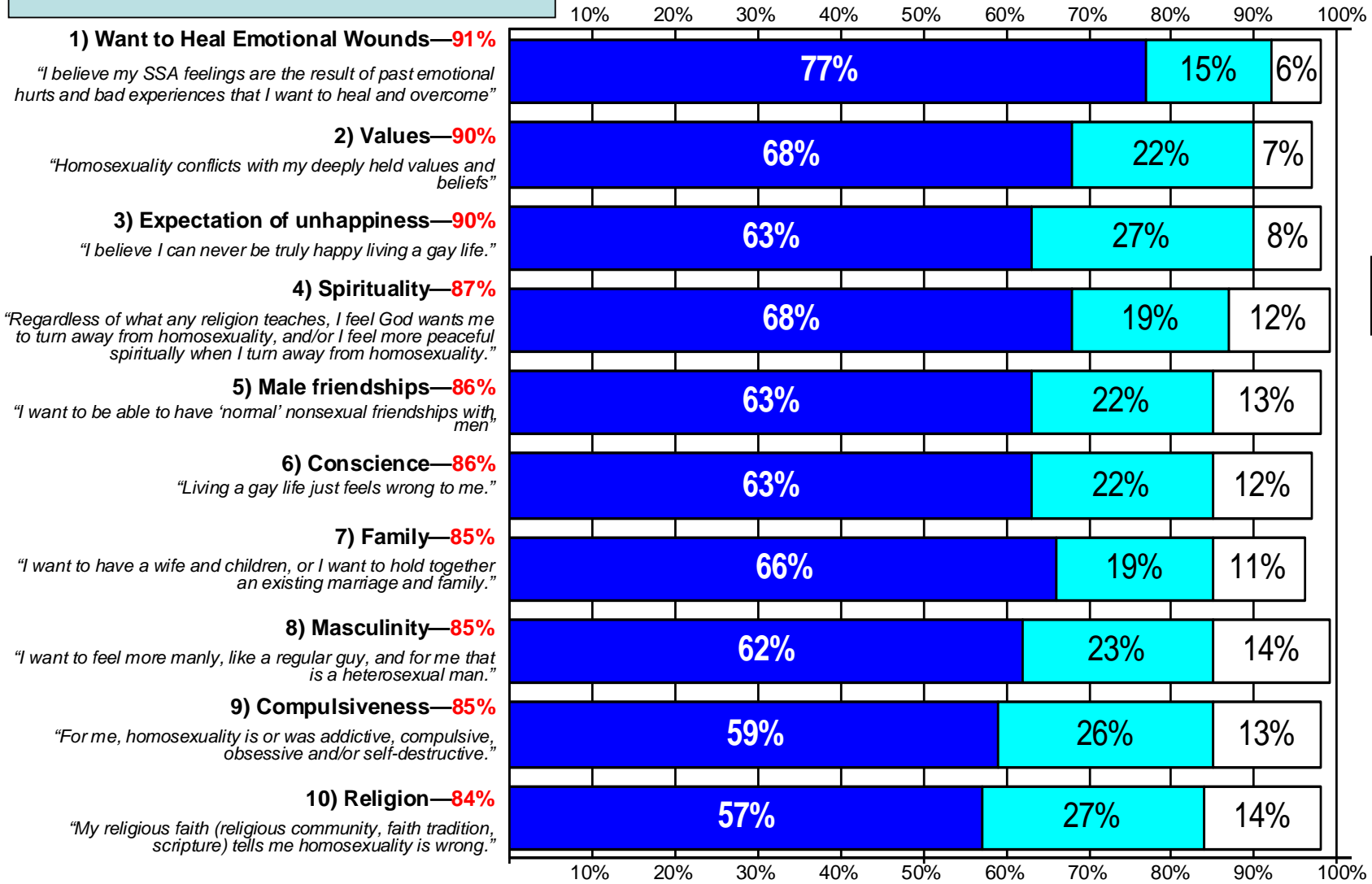
Therefore, the responses to this question shown on pages 12 and 13 are indicative of how common or frequent each factor may be considered to be in motivating change among this population.

(In contrast, the follow-up question (see pages 14 to 16), which asks which of these 18 (or other) factors are among the **THREE PRIMARY** motivations for change, is a better indicator of how significant each factor apparently is in motivating change among this population.)

“What motivates you to seek change?”

Percent identifying any of the following as a motivating factor

- Major motivator of my desire to change
- Somewhat motivating my desire to change
- Not true for me / not motivating desire to change

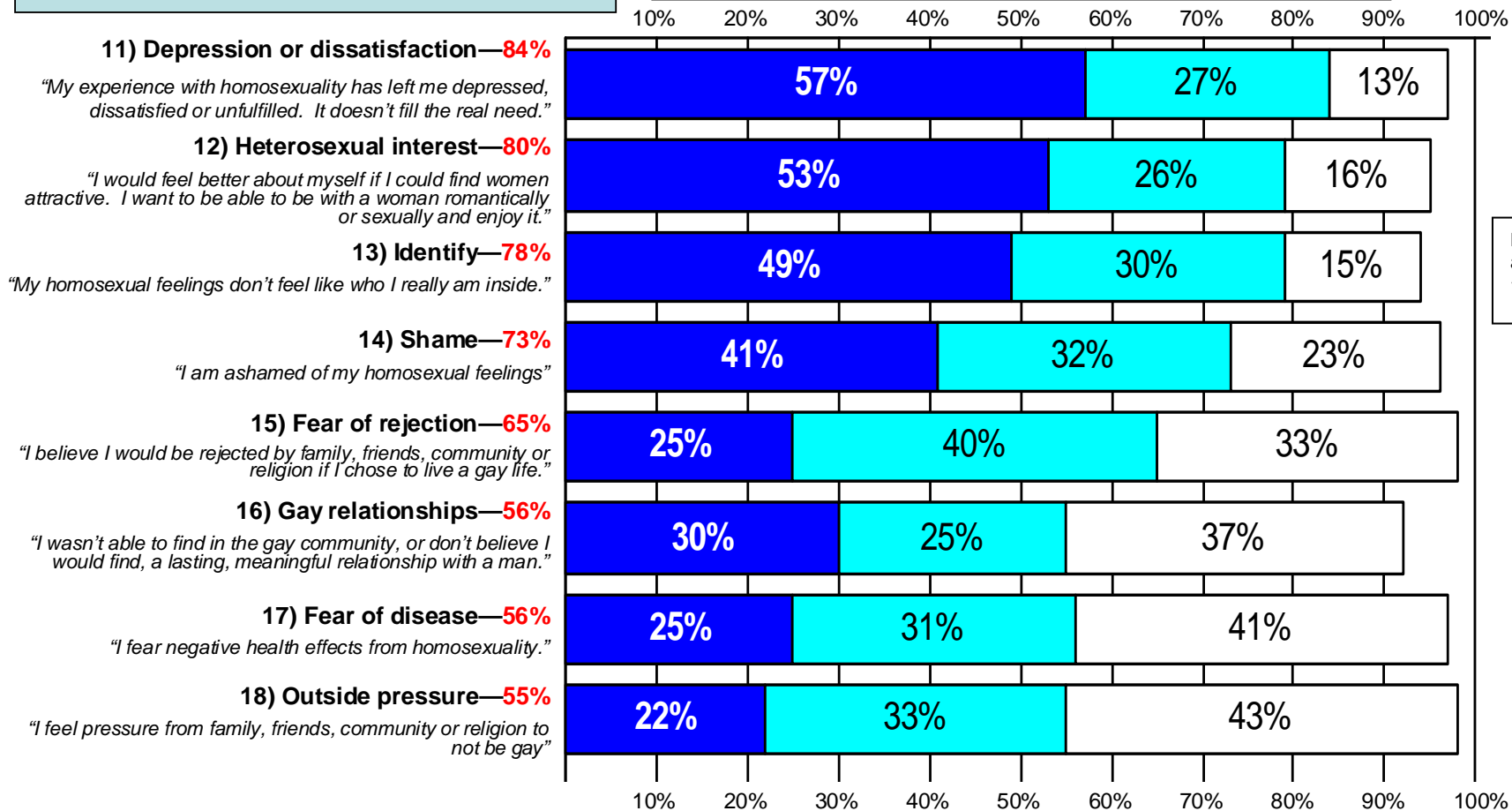


Remainder answered “not sure”

“What motivates you to seek change?” (continued)

Percent identifying any of the following as a motivating factor

- Major motivator of my desire to change
- Somewhat motivating my desire to change
- Not true for me / not motivating desire to change



Remainder answered “not sure”

TOP THREE MOTIVATORS FOR CHANGE

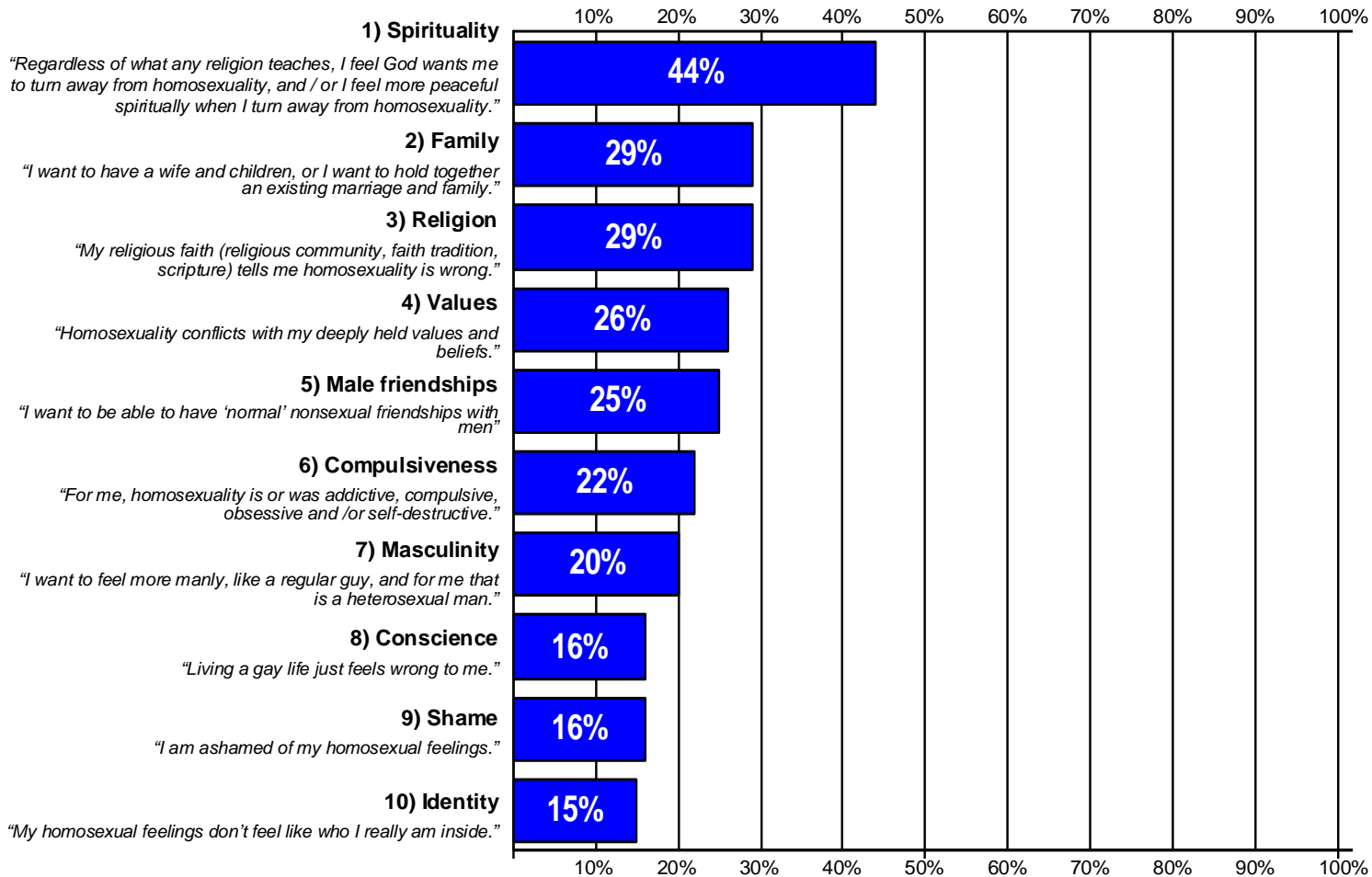
The survey then repeated the 18 previously named factors (and added an “other” category) and asked:

“Which of the following are among the THREE PRIMARY things motivating you to seek change?”

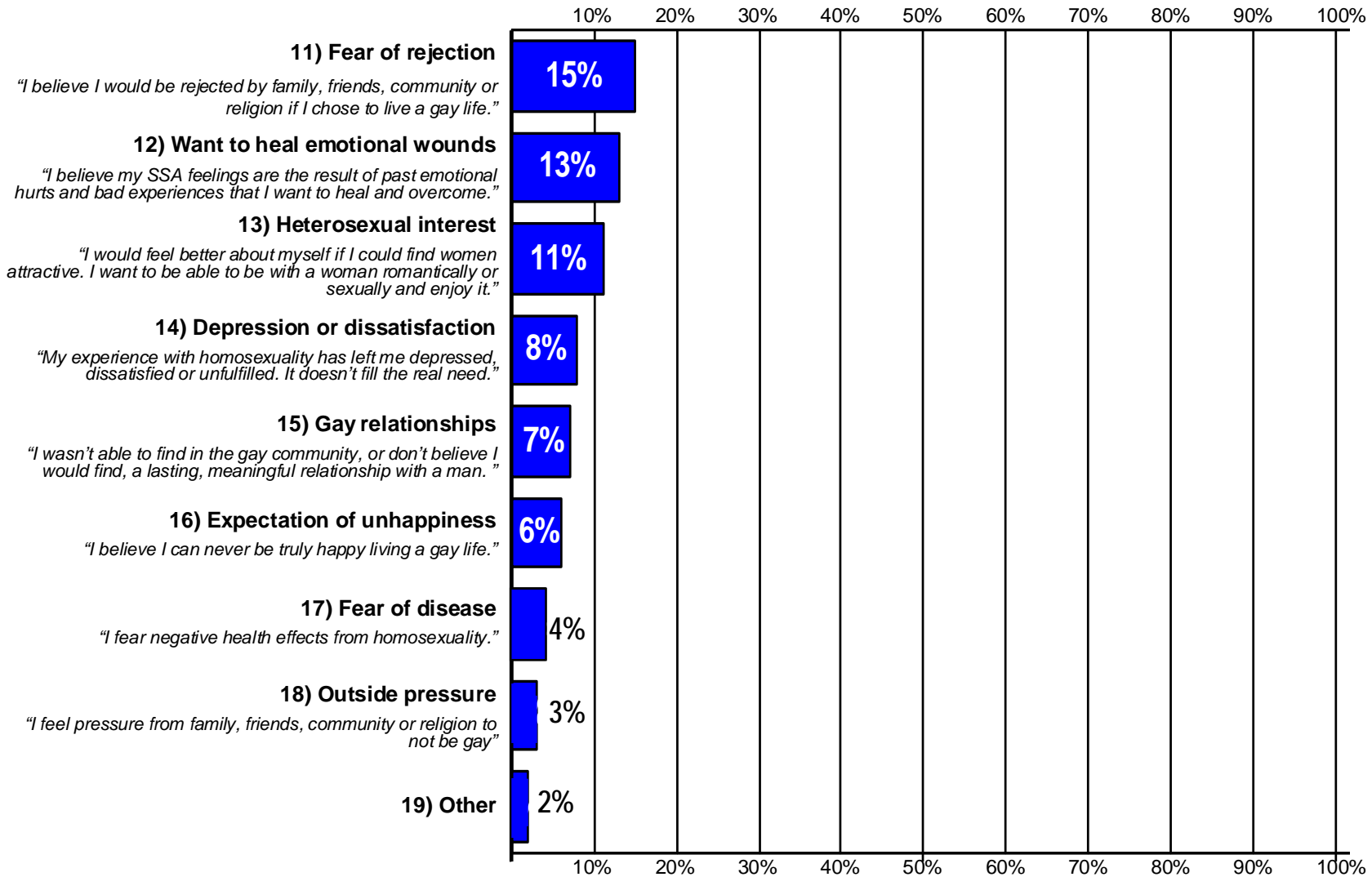
Whereas the earlier question, “What is motivating your desire to change?” (pages 11 through 13) identified how common or frequent each factor is among this population, this question, asking respondents to identify three PRIMARY motivators, is intended to help measure which factors are **MOST influential or significant** to them.

So, while “desire to heal emotional wounds” is the most frequently identified factor (cited by 91.5% of respondents as a major or somewhat motivating factor driving their desire to change), only 13% of respondents considered it one of their personal top-three motivators for change. Eleven other factors were more frequently cited as one of three primary motivators.

“Which of the following are among the THREE primary things motivating you to seek change?”



“Which of the following are among the THREE primary things motivating you to seek change?” (continued)



"ANY OTHER MOTIVATIONS NOT LISTED?"

Respondents were asked an open-ended question: "What other factors not listed here, if any, motivate you to diminish homosexual attractions or develop heterosexual attractions?"

Only a few respondents offered any unique factors not already identified in the list provided. Additional factors identified were:

- A sense of insecurity or inferiority (2 respondents; 1%)
- Dissatisfaction with homosexual sex (2 respondents; 1%)
- Fear of mental health problems (2 respondents; 1%)
- Quality of life concerns (2 respondents; 1%)
- "A desire to be 'normal'" / "I feel better and calmer if I am in harmony with tradition and the majority of average people" (2 respondents; 1%)
- Fear of becoming involved with a minor (1 respondent; 0.5%).

SELECTED OPEN-ENDED ANSWERS ON MOTIVATIONS TO CHANGE

In another open-ended question, respondents were invited to elaborate on their motivations to change.

Following are selected quotes from their responses, provided here to add insight into why some respondents answered as they did.

Desire to heal emotional wounds

- "I realized I was looking for a father figure that my dad was not."
- "Being abused as a child programmed me for SSA."
- "I had some issues to deal with in me and my relationships. Basically I worked to be healed on those issues rather than worrying about my sexuality. As I have worked on those issues, my homosexual feelings have gone."
- "I want to overcome the wounds thrown on me via sexual abuse by other males who used me."
- "I want to become the man I was meant to be, to put behind me my dependence on my mother, to feel comfortable in the community of men, and to get my deep emotional wounds healed in healthy ways that I can be proud of."
- "My homosexual desires seem to be rooted in a deficit that I feel and want another man to fill. [In contrast,] my heterosexual desires come from a sense of being complemented by the attributes of a woman."
- "I see it as a false and unsatisfactory way to cater to basic emotional needs that were not properly met in my childhood and adolescence."
- "I have always longed to connect with a father figure. I am only attracted to men much older than me. Also these men are always larger and more physically powerful than me. It seems to me I am still a kid needing the hug of a man. I have sought this relationship in others both sexually and non-sexually, and sexually NEVER satisfied it."
- "The feeling I have toward other males is to seek an accepting relationship I always wanted but never had with my father."
- "I believe my codependency is a bigger factor than homosexuality itself. I want to eliminate the neediness I feel toward men."
- "I want to meet my emotional needs in lasting, fulfilling ways."
- "Living as a homosexual would be a form of perpetuating the sexual abuse I went through as a child, and cheating myself from a more fulfilling life."

For more on emotional pain perceived to be at the root of unwanted same-sex attractions, see the June 2004 People Can Change survey at <http://www.peoplecanchange.com/Surveyoncauses.pdf>.

Values

- “These feelings always contradicted with my moral values. They’ve caused me much pain when they’ve come up within my male friendships.”
- “I know I am living a lie.”

Expectation of unhappiness

- “I truly believe I can never be happy in a gay life and I’m positive that change is possible. This motivates me to seek change.”

Spirituality

- “I want to be a true Christian. Being gay stands between me and my relationship with the Lord.”
- “I have a strong relationship with God and anything that comes between that I don’t want in my life. This has been a huge obstacle in my relationship with God. I want to live the life God has for me, not the one I feel is easiest at times.”
- “I do not feel I can be the man God intended me to be with SSA.”
- “I am seeking a better relationship with God by giving up SSA for God’s will.”

Male friendships

- “I find homosexual feelings incompatible with genuine male friendships.”
- “I want male buddies who I can chill out with and be honest with each other.”
- “What truly motivates me to change is the hope of finding true non-sexual male friends.”
- “Having healthy same-gendered friendships is MUCH more rewarding, even with guys I would normally have had sexual feelings toward in the past. I get to know them as people, and the SSA feelings immediately subside.”
- “I want to connect with men in a non-sexual way. I was doing the sexual way for a long time and it never gave me what it was that I was really wanting. Now that I have healthy real male friendships and I am getting my needs met, I am happier than I have been most of my life.”

Conscience

- “Whenever I have indulged in these feelings or behaviors it feels overwhelmingly wrong, false, and self-destructive.”
- It just doesn’t feel normal, no matter how hard I try to explain to myself that it is normal.”

Family

- "I believe happiness lies in living a life where I am loved by a woman, living in a marriage, with children, constantly improving and growing in those relationships."
- "I want to fulfill my vows of marriage."
- "I want to be happy, and happiness to me means a wife and children in a loving family."
- "I'd like to have a full relationship with a woman with whom I could have children and live in the complete sense. I think man and woman are meant for each other."
- "My biggest desire is to keep my family together. I believe that gay men are born that way, but that lifestyle doesn't appeal to me now."
- "I am married with family and I desperately want to do right by all of them and myself. I hate the double life I led knowing I wasn't satisfied in a homosexual world and knowing that I wasn't satisfying my wife in a heterosexual world."

Masculinity

- "I feel broken and incomplete with SSA. I want to be a man, feel like a man, lead a normal healthy masculine life."
- "I want to let go of all the hurt from past wounds. I want to feel more masculine and to get and maintain healthy friendships with other men."
- "The SSA makes me not identify with being a man."
- "I want to be proud of being male. I am not."
- "I want to conform to my God-given gender, to achieve and become fully male."
- "I want to feel, think, look, act, be and live heartfelt masculinity after that of God's own heart and image."
- "Having stepped away from homosexuality, I realize it to be a faulty replacement for a secure sense of masculine identity. I believe that as I see myself more as a real man, my SSA will diminish."

Compulsiveness

- "I am not happy in the compulsive behaviors."
- "When I fall for another guy, I'm really falling for his body, which has nothing to do with the guy himself. The fact that I'm not capable of falling for less attractive guys (who have wonderful personalities) gives a fetish feel to it."
- "I was sexually addicted when I was still 'out there.' Now that I am nearly nine years abstinent, I feel more content."
- "Homosexuality was for me very addictive, self-destructive."
- "I feel happier and more powerful when my mind is not dominated by sexual compulsion."

Religion

- "Scripture plainly states it is wrong."
- "Fear of hell. If I did not believe hell was the price, I'd never leave the gay life."
- "My spiritual guide and Rabbi believes it is the right thing to do. It is hard for me to understand, but I am going on the Jewish principle of "first do the right thing, and then come to understand it."
- "My faith teaches me that homosexual activity is sinful, and my faith has been my guiding light throughout my life."

Depression or dissatisfaction

- "Disillusionment from the gay community...a world where what matters most is youth and good looks. Once you grow old and lose them then the new boys on the scene eliminate you easily...It all ends up in despair."
- "When I experimented I saw that the gay lifestyle brought out the negative and self destructive tendencies in me... When I saw the gay lifestyle for what it is, it was no longer a question of religion, it was one of 'lived experience'."
- "The gay world's obsession with age and physical appearance, which I've internalized as my SSA is based purely on these factors."
- "Every time I fantasize about male sex, I get more depressed."
- "Homosexual behaviors weren't fulfilling the emptiness in me. It was making me more needy and dependent on my boyfriend."
- "Some of my homosexual relationships were deceptive and unfulfilling, leading to short-term depression and anxiety."
- "Homosexual feelings are the major cause of my depression and my feeling of inadequacy as a man."
- "I don't have the energy (and age any more) to survive in the intensely competitive and youth-obsessed gay lifestyle."

Heterosexual interest

- "The fun you can have having sex with a woman."
- "I would love to know what it is like to look at a woman and feel the same lust I feel for guys."

Identity

- "For me, it never seemed like who I was or what I wanted for my life. Yet it kept persisting in my life until I started reparative therapy and deep personal work. Once I did, it was like a tremendous pressure had been released from my soul. I have found more peace."
- "The homosexual man just wasn't me. I was never happy in that pretentious skin. I'm happier now being authentic."
- "I felt like I was living outside my true self."

Shame

- "I am a married man, father and grandfather. I am totally ashamed of the feelings that I have."

Fear of rejection

- "My main issue is fear of being looked down upon."
- "Fear of homophobic attacks and discrimination."
- "Career and financial factors would be greatly diminished if I persisted with homosexual attractions."

Outside pressure

- "The strongest reason I think is society as it is today. For me, it's extremely important to fit in. I grew up in a straight community and am still surrounded by straight people."
- "Community and family pressure."

DO MOTIVATIONS DIFFER BASED ON AMOUNT OF GAY EXPERIENCE?

The survey asked respondents to self-identify "how involved have you been with homosexuality and the gay community? (In other words, how much first hand knowledge do you have of homosexuality, gay culture, or gay life?)" Respondents could answer "A great deal," "A moderate amount," "A little" or "Not at all." The survey instrument did not ask respondents to quantify what they considered to be "a great deal" versus "a moderate amount," etc.

For the most part, reported motivations did not differ significantly based on amount of reported experience with homosexuality and the gay community. But there are some notable exceptions:

Those who reported "a great deal" of experience were **less likely** than those with no experience to be motivated by:

- **identity conflict** (*"My homosexual feelings don't feel like who I really am inside"*). Seventy percent of those with "a great deal" of experience identified this as a motivation to change, versus 95% of those with no gay experience – **a difference of 25 percentage points**.
- **fear of rejection** (*"I believe I would be rejected by family, friends, community or religion if I chose to live a gay life"*). Fifty percent of those with "a great deal" of experience identified this as a motivation to change, versus 71% of those with no gay experience – **a difference of 21 percentage points**.
- **shame**. Sixty-nine percent of those with "a great deal" of experience identified this as a motivation to change, versus 82% of those with no gay experience – **a difference of 13 percentage points**.

On the other hand, those who reported "a great deal" of experience were **more likely** than those with no experience to be motivated by:

- **fear of disease**. Fifty-nine percent of those with "a great deal" of experience identified this as a motivation to change, versus 42% of those with no gay experience – **a difference of 17 percentage points**.
- **spirituality**. Ninety-one percent of those with "a great deal" of experience identified this as a motivation to change, versus 76% of those with no gay experience – **a difference of 15 percentage points**.
- **depression or dissatisfaction** (*"My experience with homosexuality has left me feeling depressed, dissatisfied or unfulfilled. It doesn't fill the need that I want it to"*). Eighty-two percent of those with "a great deal" of experience identified this as a motivation to change, versus 71% of those with no experience with homosexuality or gay life – **a difference of 14 percentage points**.
- a desire to overcome **compulsiveness** (*"For me, homosexuality is (was) addictive, compulsive, obsessive, and/or self-destructive"*). Eighty-nine percent of those with "a great deal" of experience identified this as a motivation to change, versus 76% of those with no gay experience – **a difference of 13 percentage points**.

The **least amount of difference** in motivations was found in the following areas:

- **Expectations** (*"I believe I can never be truly happy living a gay life"*). The percentage of respondents identifying this as a motivating factor – 89% – was identical among those who reported "a great deal" of experience and those who reported no gay experience.
- **Values** (*"Homosexuality conflicts with my deeply held values and beliefs"*). Only 3 percentage points separated those with "a great deal" of experience (89%) and those with no experience (92%).
- **Conscience** (*"Living a gay life just feels wrong to me"*). Five percentage points separated those with "a great deal" of experience (82%) and those with no experience (87%).

OUTSIDE PRESSURE OR ENCOURAGEMENT

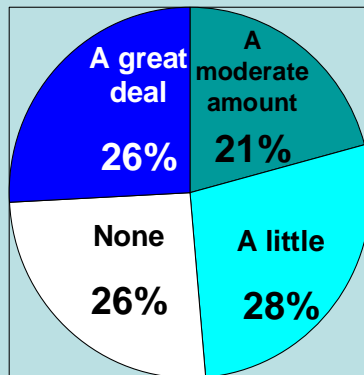
The survey explored the “conventional wisdom” that those seeking to alter their same-sex attractions do so because they yield to societal, religious, community or family pressure.

The survey asked respondents how much pressure or encouragement they felt either to “go straight” on the one hand or to “come out gay” on the other.

- 74% reported feeling some level of pressure or encouragement to **reject** homosexuality.
- 54% reported feeling some level of pressure or encouragement to **accept** homosexuality.

Pressure or Encouragement to REJECT Homosexuality

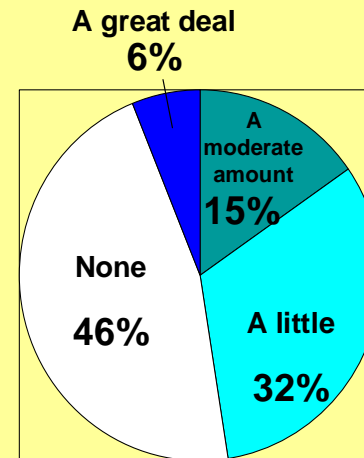
How much pressure or encouragement, if any, do you feel from others (family, friends, community, religion, or society at large) to **NOT accept a homosexual identity and NOT live a gay life?**



74% feel some level of pressure or encouragement

Pressure or Encouragement to ACCEPT Homosexuality

How much pressure or encouragement, if any, do you feel from others to **ACCEPT a gay identity and to live a gay life?**



54% feel some level of pressure or encouragement

- Invited to comment in open-ended questions, a number of respondents volunteered that “pressure” and “encouragement” were distinctly different: they generally welcomed encouragement and support of others in their efforts to change, but resented pressure, either to change or to “come out gay.”
- The survey asked those who had said they felt any pressure or encouragement to NOT accept homosexuality, “who or what is the source of this pressure or encouragement.” A total of 121 people chose to respond to this question, identifying multiple sources:
 - Family, parents, wife: **59** (33% of people responding to this question)
 - Religion, church, scripture, God, spiritual leader: **56** (32%)
 - Friends: **39** (22%)
 - Society, culture, community: **11** (6%)
 - Myself: **7** (4%)
 - Work, career: **3** (2%)
 - Therapist: **2** (1%)
- The survey asked those who had said they felt any pressure or encouragement to ACCEPT homosexuality and live a gay life, “who or what is the source of this pressure or encouragement?” A total of 100 people chose to respond to this question, again identifying multiple sources:
 - Gay friends, gay community: **32** (32% of people responding to this question)
 - Society, culture: **27** (27%)
 - Mass media: **20** (20%)
 - Friends: **21** (21%)
 - Family, wife: **12** (12%)
 - Therapist or therapeutic community: **7** (7%)
 - Work, career: **5** (5%)
 - Church, religion: **2** (2%)