Gay men having sex with women? [1]

Dear Alice,

Do gay guys actually go with girls just so no one knows they are gay? How would they be able to "perform" on the girl if they weren't attracted to them?

Answer
Dear Reader,

Indeed, there are gay men who feel pressured to mask their sexuality because of cultural, familial, religious, or personal beliefs that homosexuality is wrong. This may strike you as strange, difficult, or even upsetting, but unfortunately, the fear of being found out is strong enough to compel some LGBT people to perform in situations in which they might not feel comfortable.

Sexually speaking, an erection is not necessarily a measure of a man’s sexual orientation. Gay men can get erections for many reasons. For example, they may be turned on by a woman, aroused by physical sensations of touching, and/or fantasize about male-to-male sex during the act. Remember, the brain is one of the most important organs for sexual arousal. Just being turned on could enable a gay man to perform sexually?even if he is not normally attracted to women.

In addition, though people tend to view sexuality as being clearly hetero- or homo-sexual, it might be more accurate to think of an individual’s sexuality as falling along a continuum, such as the sexuality spectrum devised by Alfred Kinsey [2]. On this spectrum there are as many different sexual identities and behaviors as there are people. As detailed in My girlfriend can’t get over that I experimented with men [3], sexual orientation is usually comprised of three parts: attraction, how one acts on that attraction, and how one identifies (gay, straight, bisexual, etc).

Identifying one’s sexuality and choosing whether or not to share this information with others can be a complex and confusing process. For someone feeling confused about sexuality, it might be helpful to speak with a counselor, particularly one who specializes in sexual identity. Columbia students can make an appointment at Counseling and Psychological Services [4] by calling x4-2878.

To answer your question plainly, it’s likely that some gay men do have sexual relationships with women to hide their true orientation, but they shouldn’t have to.

Alice!

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