Rainbow Nursing Interest Group

An Interest Group of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO)

<http://rnig.weebly.com/>

**Attitudes Towards Homosexuality**

The Riddle Scale, developed by Dr. Dorothy Riddle, is a model used to understand people’s responses towards homosexuality. The scale includes four negative and four positive levels of attitude towards lesbians and gay men.

**Negative Levels of Attitude**

1. **Repulsion:** Gay people are sick, crazy, immoral and sinful, which justifies changing or eliminating them.

2. **Pity:** Gay men and lesbians are somehow born that way and should be pitied. The goal is to help these poor individuals to be as “normal as possible”.

3. **Tolerance:** Homosexuality is viewed as a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and most people "grow out of." Thus, lesbians and gay men must be protected and treated as children. They should not be given positions of authority because they still are working through adolescent behaviours.

4. **Acceptance:** Still implies there is something to accept, characterized by such statements as "You're not a gay to me, you're a person." "What you do in bed is your business", "That's fine as long as you don't flaunt it." ("Flaunt" usually means say or do anything that makes people aware.) This attitude ignores the pain of invisibility, the stress of closet behaviour and denies the social and legal realities with which gay people live.

**Positive Levels of Attitude**

1. **Support:** Gay men and lesbians deserve legal and human rights. People should treat others fairly, regardless of one’s own comfort with homosexuality.

2. **Admiration:** Acknowledges that being lesbian/gay in our society takes strength. This also includes looking at oneself and working on one’s own homophobic and heterosexist attitudes.

3. **Appreciation:** Values the diversity of people and sees lesbians and gay men as a valid part of that diversity. This attitude also includes a willingness to combat homophobia in oneself and in others.

4. **Nurturing:** Lesbians and gay men are indispensable in our society. This includes viewing them with genuine affection, acting as an advocate.