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# LGBTQA holds dating lessons

■ 'Flirting 101' and 'Speed Dating' taught participants how to make dating a safe, positive experience

By Kara Cogswell  
 Oregon Daily Emerald

Everyone has unique criteria for choosing a person to date, whether seeking a certain physical type or similar interests. But for nearly everyone, one thing seems to hold true — finding just the right person is rarely easy.

And as if dating wasn't hard enough, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual communities face one more challenge to meeting their significant others.

"It's very hard to meet people because there's just this assumption that everyone is heterosexual," said Hanna Persson, events coordinator for the University Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual Alliance.

Thursday night, the University LGBTQA, the Lane Community College LGBTQA and the HIV Alliance sponsored "Flirting 101" and "Speed

Dating" to help make dating a positive experience for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual individuals.

"Flirting 101" was a workshop presented by Curtis Borloglou-Boyd. Borloglou-Boyd, who is the men's community outreach director for the HIV Alliance, outlined in his presentation practical tips for flirting effectively.

Flirting, he said, is not just about giving compliments or trying to get the person into bed. It should also be about getting to know the other person — and finding out whether there is any potential for a relationship.

Borloglou-Boyd also brought up issues related directly to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual dating, such as how people can subtly mention sexual orientation without putting themselves at risk for being the target of violence or discrimination.

Safety is often an issue that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people have to consider in dating, Persson said. "For queer people, it's not the same [as for heterosexuals]," she said. "It's very difficult to meet people if you're not in a safe space."

Following "Flirting 101," many among the approximately 40 audience members participated in "Speed Dating." During "Speed Dating," participants, wearing tags with their names and a number, sat in two rows of chairs facing each other. Each person talked with the person sitting across from him or her for two minutes, then moved over one chair.

At the end of each two-minute segment, participants rated the person they had talked to on a scale from one to ten, based on the conversation they'd had. After the game, players wrote the names of those they were most interested in on a "wish list." Those lists were turned in, and if two people listed each other, names and contact information were exchanged.

Senior Nikki Fancher said one positive aspect of events such as "Flirting 101" and "Speed Dating" is that they help people make connections with one another.

"It's not just about dating," she said. "It's about meeting new friends — finding people with common interests."

## Crisis

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include relationship breakups, family support or coming-out issues, academic failure and depression. But the center also accepts a large number of calls dealing with suicide. "With suicide issues, we always focus on safety and support," Lusk said.

Callers who may be suicidal are the most challenging for the staff, but the calls are not necessarily uncommon. Last year, the crisis line charted 45 suicide calls.

Each night, the center receives an average of four calls, not including hang-ups, that deal with all types of issues. Lusk said more calls come in during winter term because of rainy weather, fewer distractions and fewer activities for people to participate in.

Haley Dillon is a junior sociology major and a staff member in the Crisis Center. When she is working, Dillon said she handles "regular callers" who are fairly dependent on the line for support and advice, and she wants to help the callers deal with their problems. But she also often suggests they receive additional counseling from the University's Counseling Center, the ASUO Women's Center, Sexual Assault Support Services, Whitebird Clinic's 24-hour drop-in service, Womenspace and other campus and community resources. "We try to emphasize that no problem is too small," Dillon said.

Dillon added that her job is rewarding because she of-

fers callers support, reassurance and resources where they can get further assistance. Dillon, who began working on the staff winter term, works the line once or twice a week.

"People are always in need of help, even if they don't admit it," Dillon said. "Every person deals with their crisis on a completely different level."

Dillon said that even after she had gone through the training and role-playing, she still faced challenging calls. She frequently helps freshmen and international students who have problems socializing and adjusting to college. Coworker Shabd Simran Khalsa-Baldwin, a freshman pre-nursing major, said she also listens to students who experience hard times around holidays because they are not with their families.

"Nothing is like your first call — that is when you really understand, and you can start helping," Dillon said. "I just think it is so awesome, because if I needed that outlet, I would be thankful to talk to any of

**The University's Crisis Center: 346-4488**  
 Daytime hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Monday through Friday  
 Walk into the University's Counseling Center or call the Crisis Line  
 Nighttime: 5 p.m. to 8 a.m.  
 Monday through Friday  
 Call the Crisis Line  
 Weekends: 24 hours  
 Saturday and Sunday  
 Call the Crisis Line

our workers."

Khalsa-Baldwin, who has been on the staff since fall term, said counselors use weekly staff meetings to "debrief" calls that came in during their 15-hour all-night shifts and talk about how they were handled. She added that her job is not about the money. With plans to enter midwifery and health care, she said her work offers her great experience dealing with people.

"It is human contact," Khalsa-Baldwin said. "It's dealing with real situations."

## Donation

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Buch said, students may be able to stay in school and not be forced to take on extra jobs to make ends meet.

"It means they'll be able to devote more time and energy to their studies," he said. "[The scholarship] means, in essence, that those students have full support for education." He said the donated money will also help students who do not actually receive the Staton scholarships by freeing up existing money, which would allow even more students to receive some form of federal funding.

"Federal money can be moved on to other students who may not have gotten it," he said.

Gene Evans, a spokesman for the State of Oregon Scholarship Commission, said the donation will allow approximately 250 more students to receive funds for the upcoming school year. More available scholarship money will mean students may not have to take out as many loans, he said.

Evans said the University is solely in charge of the money. But despite this, he said, the commission will be involved because it will be able to dole out money to students

who may not normally receive it.

University President Dave Frohn-mayer called the donation heart-warming and said it will have a definite impact on the future of Oregon's students, allowing the University to provide a more financially stable education to its students in the future. "It will allow us to recruit students of more talent and diverse backgrounds," he said.

Elizabeth Bickford, director of student financial aid, said approximately 40 out of the 100 students offered one of the new scholarships have accepted. She said five students at each grade level have been selected to receive \$10,000 scholarships, called the Staton Opportunity Scholarship. The rest of the recipients will receive the \$4,000 State Tuition Scholarship.

"It's not every day someone wants to give you \$10 million," said Kathryn Owen, referring to the phone call made by Staton's daughter, Anne Staton Voilleque, that preceded the donation.

The scholarship fund, initiated by Bernice Ingalls Staton, a former University student and Eugene resident, is for students who claim Oregon residency, graduated from an Oregon high school and will be full-time stu-

dents at the University the next year. Financial need is also a criterion.

Students declaring a major in the School of Music, the College of Education and the School of Architecture and Allied Arts will be given preference for the scholarships, Bickford said, but it is not a requirement.

Jean-Paul Voilleque, Staton's grandson, said the preference was made because students in the liberal arts may not always have a guaranteed salary after graduation. "I think that the intent is, there are certain degrees with a return on their investment," he said. "A lot of the liberal arts majors have a little less of a guarantee."

Bickford said she hopes the scholarships will allow more students to attend the University.

"I would hope that students who might not see themselves as a University of Oregon student might think the scholarship is for them," she said. "[The scholarship] is advertising to students who might not consider the University."

Buch said the donation shows Staton's devotion to helping financially needy students in Oregon.

"Because of the size of the donation, and the generosity it represents, it's breathtaking," he said.