GUIDED VISUALIZATION

Think of the person you've been most in love with. Imagine you've gone out for a few months, but you can't tell anyone about this person or be open about your relationship.

It's Friday afternoon and people are getting ready to go out. They're talking about their plans for the night. You're in your room, listening to some music and thumbing through a magazine, when your roommate comes in with some friends. Your roommate says, "I'm going out with so-and-so tonight. We're going to have dinner and then head over to the party."

The others mention their weekend plans and talk about who they're seeing. One person asks you, "What are *you* doing tonight? You're not going to study again, are you?"

You reply that you don't have any big plans -- that you're just going to hang out.

Then they try to fix you up with someone, but you say, "Maybe some other time."

They continue talking about their plans and the people they're going out with. Whenever you can, you smile, nod your head, and joke with them about love and sex, so they won't be suspicious.

You think about your friend. You wish you could tell your roommate about the good times you've had and how it feels to be in love. But you know you can't say anything.

Finally, they all leave. You take a shower, dress, and meet each other a block from where you live. Although you're really glad to see each other, you can't hug or kiss. You just smile and say hello.

You go to a restaurant for dinner. You sit across from each other and make sure not to look too long in each other's eyes. You're also careful not to touch one another.

After dinner, you decide to see a movie. You both would have preferred to go to the party your roommate mentioned, but you wouldn't be able to dance with each other. At least in the movie theater you can sit close together.

When the movie's over and you exit the theater, you'd like to put your arm around each other or hold hands, but you can't. Instead, you clamp your hands behind your back.

You wish there were some place you could go together. You'd like to go to your room, but people might wonder why you always go there, and your roommate might walk in.

You wish that you could tell everyone the truth, but you remember some of the comments people have made about faggots and dykes, and you're afraid that you'll get disowned or lose many of your friends. So you continue living a lie, pretending to be someone who you're not.

—Adapted from Blumenfeld, W. J. (Ed.). (1992). *Homophobia: How we all pay the price*. Boston: Beacon Press.

[From UnderstandingPrejudice.org]