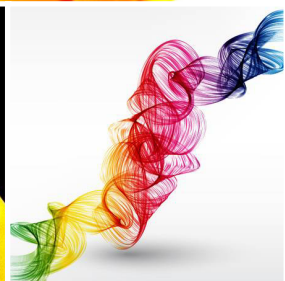
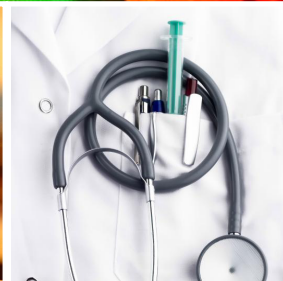


Act RIGHT

H A N D B O O K

DEVELOPED BY HOPE ALLIANCE FOUNDATION



FOREWORD

Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender people all over the world face violence and discrimination. One of the reasons why many perpetrators of the violence and discrimination against LGBT people go scot free is because they (the LGBT people) do not have the required information to enable them act right.

This book- Act Right! Is part of a COC Netherlands project-the PRIDE Project- which is aimed at creating opportunities to empower LGBT people and those who are committed to ensuring their welfare. The purpose of this book is to provide its readers ample, precise and short information on various issues that affect LGBT people and how they can address the issues.

First, the book looks at human rights of LGBT people. It expounds on the various rights all Ghanaians are entitled to including LGBT people. It goes further to give information on what to do when you are arrested, who to report to when you face violence and how to ensure you are not discriminated against because of your sexual orientation or gender identity.

This book also has a number of its pages dedicated to health issues. It gives you general health care information and expounds on HIV. We are aware that one of the biggest killers of Gay men is discrimination because of their sexual orientation. This book provides good information that will enable you empower yourself even if you find out that you are HIV positive.

There are other sections on entrepreneurship, relationships, effective communication, skills building and others, all dedicated to ensuring that you have enough information to make informed decisions as an LGBT person or an Ally.
Enjoy the read!

Robert Akoto Amofo
President
Alliance for Equality and Diversity (AfED)

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Gideon Cobby Adjaka- Executive Director - Hope Alliance Foundation {health section}

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SECTION ONE: MY HUMAN RIGHTS

WHAT IS HUMAN RIGHTS!!!!

- These are freedoms, privileges and other things etc. you are entitled by birth, human right is based on shared values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence.

BASIC FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

All Human Beings including LGBT Ghanaians have basic rights that should be respected and protected. These Rights can be found in the Ghanaian Constitution and other treaties that Ghana has signed an agreement to protect all human beings from abuses of any kind. As an LGBT Ghanaian please note that you have among others, these under listed rights which is often violated.

- You have the right to non-discrimination and to be free from violence and harassment. Please take action when someone harasses you or discriminate against you just because of your Sexual Orientation.
- You have the right to life. Do not take any form of threats to your life as a joke no matter who is making such threats (parents, siblings, neighbors or other friends). Report any threat on your life immediately.
- You have the right to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Report ordinary citizens who commit this offence to the police or human rights NGOS, and if the offence is by a police officer report to an officer in a higher position/rank or the Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Bureau (PIPS) and again to a Human rights NGOS who will monitor and make sure the PIPS officials are not bias.
- You have the right to a fair trial. Anytime you get a court case which may be related to your sexuality make sure you get assistance from human rights NGOS and CHRAJ so that you will be represented by a legal team that understands who you are and will make sure you are judged based on the situation at hand and not your sexuality.
- You have the right to privacy. It is wrong for someone to invade your privacy either by forcing him/herself into your room, go through your phone, computer and any other personal belongings in search of evidence to prove your sexuality. Resist such attempts, report offenders and secure your personal information and belongings from such intruders.
- You have the right to employment. If you are sacked from your place of work because of your sexuality situation report that organization and your matter will be investigated for justice to prevail.
- You have the right to medical care. But some health professionals stigmatize and discriminate against Lesbians, gays and bisexuals who visit their health centers for care.

If you know of any hospital, clinic, doctor, nurse or any staff of a health center violating citizens' rights to health care report them immediately.

You can find further information on basic right you are entitled to in the following:

- Constitution of Ghana {chapter 5}
- UDHR {universal declaration of human rights} document

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LGBT PERSONS, ESPECIALLY REGARDING SECURITY ISSUES IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.

As LGBT Ghanaians, learn to live responsibly and take your personal security very serious. Be careful with people you meet on social media or even those you call your friends. Do not put your personal and sensitive information out there as criminals can use them to blackmail you.

Whenever someone tries to blackmail you, don't pay them any money otherwise they will soon come back for more. Report such people to the Police or Human Rights NGOs who can be of help.

ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION AND INTEROGATION

Arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention are the arrest or detention of an individual in a case in which there is no evidence that they committed a crime against legal statute, or in which there has been no proper due process of law. There are also instances where while in detention victims are asked to pay bribe in the name of bail before they will be released.

Whenever an officer says he is arresting you ask him for what offence and also the warrant for that arrest. You have the right to be immediately told of the reason of your arrest in a language that you understand.

If you get the opportunity to make a call before the arrest or at the police station (You have the right to make a call to someone telling them which police station you are) call someone who can contact as many people as you wish and someone who can assist you legally so that you don't spend much time in detention where you may suffer further abuse.

WHEN YOU ARE BEING INTERROGATED!!!!

- You have the right to remain silent and are not required to make a statement to the police until brought before a court.
- You have the right to make a statement voluntarily in the presence of an independent witness.
- You have the right to make a statement in a language you have chosen.
- You have the right to have a statement recorded, read back to you and interpreted if necessary.
- The police cannot force you to say anything, however if you decide to answer questions do so in a clear and precise manner. Stick to the facts and remember to stay calm throughout the interrogation.
- Do not pay any money in the name of bail, that is bribery and the officers may frame you up citing you tried bribing them.



SECTION TWO: MY HEALTH

As an individual who identify as queer, it is important for you to empower yourself with knowledge in areas of health, the following section will throw more light on topics you might be struggling to understand

SEX AND SAFER SEX PRACTICES

Sex involve romantic actions between two or more consented people that leads to pleasure and satisfaction, sex can be either oral or penetrative, if you are sexually active or yet to start having sex, the following are important safer sex practices you should consider

- Use condoms and water based lubricants always for penetrative sex whether it vaginal or anal

- Use flavored condoms and or dental dams for oral sex including rimming
- Avoid mixing alcohol/drugs and sex, while check expiry date for condoms before using them
- Reduce multiple sex partners
- Be sure to insist on use of condoms and lubricants when engaging in orgies (group sex)

HIV AND STI

HIV and AIDS continue to be a global health challenge, while everyone is at risk of getting infected, having accurate knowledge on HIV and it related issues will help you

Basic facts you should know:

- HIV stands for Human Immune Virus
- AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- STI stands for Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, Herpes, Ulcers, Discharge & Genital warts are all examples of STI
- STIs including HIV is contracted through unprotected sex and other sexually related activities
- HIV cannot be cured totally but can be treated with anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs)
- You can only know your status by getting tested
- HIV lives in bodily fluids such as semen, vaginal fluids, breastmilk, blood and blood products
- While most STIs can be cured totally, some can have their symptoms managed

Drug Adherence

Taking medicines prescribed by your physician or healthcare provider is key factor which will contribute to complete cure for some ailment or will help control other chronic infections you might be dealing with, here are some helpful tips you should consider if you are on short term treatment or long term treatment

- Do not practice SELF MEDICATION
- Take medicine on time as prescribed, whether before, after or with meals.
- Take the right dosage and avoid abusing them, eg. taking 3 paracetamols on the go instead of 1 or 2 as prescribed
- Do not mix orthodox and herbal medicine at the same time.
- Do not mix medicine with alcohol, cigarettes or other illegal drugs.

- Visit your healthcare provider regularly for refills if you are on long term therapies
- Carry enough medicines on you when travelling
- Be sure to set alarm or other electronic reminders that will help you stay on track with treatment
- Talk to your doctor if you are experiencing reactions from the drugs you are taken
- Avoid taking medicine with cold water, coffee and or other high concentrated beverages
- Remember to complete set of medicine you are given at all times

Managing Side Effects from ARVs

Are you about to start anti-retroviral, here are some basic minor reactions you might experience and various ways you can manage them

- Loose stool or diarrhea - take ORS constantly to keep hydrated while avoiding food with too much spice or milk, avoid caffeine and alcohol, eat white starchy foods such as rice, banana, pasta in small quantity every hours
- Mild headache - Drink water as much as you can, stay away from loud noise and keep room dark while sleeping
- Numbness of the hands and feet – Keep hands and feet in warm water periodically if possible
- Mild skin rashes- Use carbolic soaps for bathing, while applying calamine ointment or cream on rashes
- Nightmares- Avoid eating fatty foods and watching movies or videos with horror and violent scenes
- Nausea & feeling of vomiting – Allow meals you eat to digest before you go to bed, and take ORS to replace lost fluids, eat dry foods such as toast, cereals, avoid fatty/sweet/spicy foods with strong odor, raise your head with a pillow if you lie down
- Feeling restless/uneasiness/changes in sleep patterns- Talk to someone or engage in a hobby to help take your minds off your current feelings
- Feeling hungry constantly – Take light meals in between, eat easy to prepare foods
- Feeling sore in the mouth or throat – Try soft and smooth foods, soak dry foods into liquids, soups or sauces for easy swallowing, avoid raw fruits and vegetables, do not eat acidic foods such as tomatoes and oranges, try cold foods possible

HIV AND NUTRITION

Good nutrition is important for everyone, but especially important person living with HIV. Eating a balanced diet is important for the following reasons

- It helps you to stay healthy, strong and energetic
- It enables ARVs works well and enable your system fight off other infection and recover from them. Follow these tips if you want to eat healthy
- Always include right proportions of items from the six main food groups into your daily diet (6 main food groups are: animal foods & its products, legumes & nuts, starchy roots & plantains, cereals & grains, fats & oils, fruits & vegetables)
- Drink plenty of fluid constantly and keep snacks with you always for in between meals
- Wash your hands thoroughly and keep kitchen utensils clean
- Wash fruits and vegetables properly before consuming, while avoid eating the following foods if they are undercooked {eggs, meat, poultry, seafood & other meat products}

PATIENTS CHARTER

Access to healthcare is one of the fundamental rights you must not be denied irrespective of your sexual orientation, religion, race, color, ethnicity, age etc. Do you know that you have your rights and responsibilities as a client when accessing services at any healthcare facility of your choice, here is a simplified version of rights you are entitled to as well as your responsibilities

RIGHTS

- You have the right to quality and basic healthcare irrespective your geographical location {that is where you find yourself}
- You are entitled to full information on your condition, management and possible risks involved {except where you are unable to make a decision or the need for treatment is urgent}
- You are entitled to know different treatment and other healthcare providers within the service
- You have the right to know identity of all your caregivers and other persons who may handle you while you are accessing healthcare services
- You have the right to consent or decline to participate in any proposed research study involving you, after a full explanation has been given to you
- You are still entitled to effective care should you withdraw from a research project
- You have the right to privacy during consultation, examination and treatment
- You are entitled to confidentiality of information obtained you, this information must only be disclosed to a third party after you have consent only be disclosed to a third party after you have consent.
- You are entitled to relevant information regarding policies and regulation of the health facility you attend
- You have the right to receive explanations about hospital charges, modes of payment and other expenditure
- You are entitled to personal safety and reasonable security of your property while accessing healthcare
- You have the right to a second medical opinion if you desire that

RESPONSIBILITIES

- You must understand that you are responsible for your health and should therefore cooperate with healthcare providers
- You must provide full and accurate medical history in relation to your diagnosis, treatment, counselling and rehabilitation
- You must request additional information or clarification regarding your health if you do not clearly understand initial information you are given
- You must follow prescribed treatment, report adverse effects and follow up request by your service providers
- You must inform your healthcare provider of any anticipated problem in following treatment or advice

- You must acquire knowledge on preventive, promotive and simple curative practices where necessary in order to seek early professional help
 - You must maintain safe and hygienic environment in order to promote good health
 - You must respect the rights of other patients/clients and health service providers
- You must protect the property of the said healthy facility where you find yourself

GOOD SKIN BEAUTY TIPS

- Drink at least 8 glasses of water daily, while taking vitamins or supplement regularly.
- Avoid smoking, and excess intake of alcohol & coffee.
- Eat balanced diet including fruits and vegetables
- Cleanse and use good moisturizing products to remove skin blemishes
- Make to time to rest, having maximum 8 hours daily.
- Do not go to bed with make up on

PERSONAL HYGIENE TIPS

- Bath regularly at least twice a day, and brush teeth as well twice preferably morning and evening before going to bed
- Keep fingernails clean and short if possible
- Maintain clean beard/moustache and shave regularly
- If you keep locks, twists or braids, ensure they are always well kept
- Use deodorant, perfumes etc. that help to prevent bad body odor
- Wear clean and ironed clothes always and keep shoes, sandals etc. polished
- Wear clean underwear's and change them regularly during 'that time of the month'

MENTAL WELLNESS

Being a queer person can be very stressful in almost every environment, it become more stressful in situations where one is struggling with issues of acceptance among the rest. In order for one to maintain mental wellness, it is important to put the following into practice

- Create support system with mutual friends and family members who accept you and fall on these to deal with daily stress as an LGBTIQ
- Get involved in community, social, religious and sporting activities in order to maintain mental and physical fitness through social connections
- Talk to a trusted friend or counselor or seek further referrals for psychosocial support in order to relieve mental stress and pressure
- Join appropriate available support groups
- Avoid alcohol and drugs as a way of dealing with mental stress

FITNESS TIPS

- Engage in brisk walk regularly, this strengthen the heart and helps to burn calories, if possible remember to walk bare foot or with a good pair of shoes
- In order to maintain shape and or form, engage in free squats regularly
- To strengthen your chest, shoulders engage in push-ups regularly
- To maintain firm and flat abs, engage in abdominal crunches
- Exercise regularly in order to stay healthy



SECTION THREE: BUSINESS & SOCIAL LIFE

As a queer folk, get empowered socially, by putting the following into practice whenever possible

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS TIPS

- Always follow the 7 Cs of communication {Be Clear, Complete, Concrete, Courteous, Correct, Considerate and Concise with your statement}
- Always listen attentively before you speak
- Use simple words that are easy to understand
- Communicate with the right words
- Avoid using jargons
- Make it a habit to read and learn new words everyday

GOOD DRESSING TIPS

- Consider the occasion or event you are dressing for.
- Do not over use accessories in order not to look bulky.
- Consider your body stature, remember not everything. fit everybody.
- Always choose garments you are comfortable with, putting into consideration weather among the rest.
- Choose color diligently putting into consideration your skin complexion.

GOOD ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS

- Identify your interest and strengths and build on them
- Take baby steps while learning from others
- Learn how to promote your start up business by sharing your vision with others tactfully
- Take action promptly and do not procrastinate
- Always make a plan and do your best to follow it
- Remember to build a reputation for yourself
- Carve a niche for yourself {that is create a unique brand that you can always take ownership of
- Build and form a strong working team
- Be mindful of your attitude

GOOD RELATIONSHIPS TIPS

- Be sure you are in agreement with each other {that is both of you should consent to the feeling of love and affection being mutual and not one sided, remember if the feeling is not mutual it could lead to pain, hurt and heartbreak}
- Engage in open conversation about what you want from each other, talk about roles, safe sex, past experiences, likes and dislikes. Be honest and sincere as much as you can
- Keep communication open, talk about everything and leave nothing to chance {don't forget that the little things you consider irrelevant are those that build trust and relationship}
- Most Importantly, learn about the laws of the land {the constitution}, know what your right and freedoms are.....Remember your rights ends where someone's else begins
- Live, Love and Laugh

CONTACT DETAILS

Are you or any of your network members in need of the following services or further referrals, contact any of the following organizations depending on your location

HIV AND AIDS EDUCATION, TESTING & COUNSELLING, CONDOM AND LUBRICANTS DISTRIBUTION, SUPPORT GROUP, CAPACITY BUILDING, HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY, RESEARCH, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS, STI TREATMENT/MANAGEMENT THROUGH REFERRALS PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT ETC.

1. HOPE ALLIANCE FOUNDATION

Email Address: hopealliance86@gmail.com
Telephone numbers:
+233243040687/+233550657539
/+233200152194
Facebook: Hope Alliance Foundation

2. Priorities on Health & Sexual Health- PORSH

Email Address: poshgh2@yahoo.co.uk
Telephone numbers: +233244833141 /
+233241610164 / +233 0302903196

3. One Heart Foundation – Cape Coast

Email Address:
oneheartfoundation20012@gmail.com
Telephone numbers: +233246165230 /
+233246577168 /+233205801534
Facebook: One Heart Foundation

4. CEPEHRG

P.O BOX AD107 Adabraka- Accra
Email Address: cepehr@gmail.com
Telephone numbers: +233244808280

5. Brother's Keeper

P.O BOX 01367
Telephone numbers: +233244154121
/+233244250144

LBO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT,
SEXUAL HEALTH & RIGHTS ETC.

6. Courageous Sisters Ghana
Email Address: Courageousisters@gmail.com
Telephone numbers:
+233244046599/+233554760793
Facebook: Courageous Sisters

7. Sisters of the Heart

Email Address: soh.edirector@gmail.com
Telephone number: +233551998677

TRANSGENDER EMPOWERMENT & NEEDS

8. Alliance for Dynamics Initiatives

Email Address: edirector.adi@gmail.com /
alliancefordynamicsinitiative@gmail.com
Telephone numbers: +233548696805
Facebook: ADI

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY, COACHING
& MENTORSHIP, HIV AND AIDS AWARENESS
CREATION, PEER & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT
ETC.

9. African Equality Centre

P.O BOX kj678 Kejetia- Kumasi
Telephone numbers: +23324417449
/+447458633388
Email Address: africanequalitycentre@gmail.com
Facebook: African Equality Centre
Website: www.africanequalitycentre.blogspot.com

10. Solace Initiatives

Email Address: solacefoundation@gmail.com
Telephone numbers: +233207477530/
+233576004509/+233551327815
Facebook:

REGIONAL FOCAL PERSONS

11. Adjei Lawrence Shone Edem {Volta region}

Email Address: shonedem@gmail.com
Telephone numbers: +233235800897/
+233504800897

12. Kojo Kissiedu {Eastern region}

Telephone number: +233208249092

13. Anthony & Pious {Western Region}

Telephone number: +2330249258509/
+2330542489564



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