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Bates College

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Chromically Ill, Sexually Active

When I was in high school, and none of my friends had sex yet, I remember everyone worrying about the silliest things happening their first time. They would say, “what if my hymen breaks and I bleed so that I bleed out?!” or maybe, “what if I accidentally pee?” Looking back, most would call these questions unreasonable. You are probably wondering why I am saying “most.”

Frequently, I am scared of having sex. Not because I don’t know what I’m doing, but because I actually do know. Pre. If there is a conundrum with spasmic on it being sad, a tongue, or an unwashed finger. I am definitely going to get an infection, and then I am definitely going to be in pain. I’d wanted to do it at night, and a partner was going to remove my underwear, then well, how would I explain the adult diaper I sometimes have to wear at night? I was sexually assaulted on campus, and yet, that can’t even be my main reservation about having sex.

I can’t remember the last time my bladder and kidneys were doing anything right. Peeing as an adult is one of the most depressing and embarrassing things you can go through. Having unannounced bowel movements may be slightly worse, but I have gotten used to it. 

Aside from my physical concerns about mechanics and my illness, it is pretty hard to think of yourself as “sexy” when you go periods of days vomiting and being totally immobile. How many times have you puked in front of your partner? Have they ever had to clean up your “mess”?

CHRONICALLY ILL

This issue was created in partnership with Bates Peer Health Educators.

Lewiston Family Planning: Sexual Resources

Located on Lisbon Street, directly across from Forage Market, is Lewiston Family Planning which offers a wide range of services and resources regarding sexual health. Lewiston Family Planning is part of a larger network of reproductive healthcare facilities in Maine under the name Maine Family Planning.

“Maine Family Planning provides affordable, gender-affirming reproductive health care services for all residents, as well as primary care, help for new parents and families, and transgender health services,” according to their website states.

Sara Hayes, a nurse practitioner at Lewiston Family Planning, added to this mission statement: “We must each person where they are,” she said, “and realize that when they come to see us, it is all about their issue that is very important to them personally, even though it is an issue that we deal with frequently.” Hayes told The Student.

In addition to the sexual health services provided by Bates Health Services, which are provided on campus, Lewiston Family Planning acts as an additional resource for Bates students. The clinic has compiled a list of the services below, as well as methods to easily navigate the Maine Family Planning healthcare system.

Sexual Health Services

• Birth Control Options: There is a full line of birth control options available in the clinic including Nexplanon arm implants, four types of intrauterine devices (IUDs), depo-shots (birth control shots), and birth control pills and rings. The birth control patch is also available by prescription from a pharmacy of your choice.

• STI Testing and Treatment: A full range of STI testing is available, including chlamydia and gonorrhea testing, and in-office rapid HIV testing (15 minutes). Blood samples are also sent out to labs for syphilis, herpes, and hepatitis B and C testing. Treatment is also available in office, and they also offer home/dorm sample collection to reduce in-person contact for those wanting treatment.

• Other Testing and Treatment for Reproductive Health Issues: Evaluation, testing, and treatment for vaginal infections, male reproductive issues, urinary tract infections (UTIs), breast issues, bleeding problems, sexuality issues, and genital wart treatment are also available. There are also annual exams available and Pap tests for patients starting at the age of 21. In the case of abnormal Pap tests, evaluation is provided in-office along with colposcopy to look for signs of disease.

• Pregnancy Testing and Abortion Care: Testing for pregnancy and options counseling for positive tests are provided. Medication abortions are accessible through telehealth for up to eleven weeks after your last menstrual period. Abortion services are provided up to 14 weeks and are only available in the Augusta Maine Family Planning office.

• HIV and HPV Prevention: PEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP post-exposure prophylaxis can be prescribed for HIV prevention. The Gardasil HPV vaccine is also available to universal patients under the age of 27.

The Student

Playing the Waiting Game

“Why not wait until after you’ve tied the knot?” PAGE 2

Reimaging Hookup Culture

Creating a hookup culture that works for you PAGE 3

Intimacy Within the Bachelor

(Waj)** in a Garlic? PAGE 3

Exploring intimacy without a sexual partner PAGE 3

Sex for at 22

PAGE 3

Health Services

SEXUAL HEALTH PAGE 7

BHS aims to educate students on sexual health

Lewiston Main.

VOLUME 151, NO. 3 WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021

LEWISTON, MAINE

Read more anonymous Sex Survey comments on Page 6

LEWISTON RESOURCES

Continued on Page 8

Anonymous Contributor

According to an anonymous Sex Survey with 340 respondents, almost half of students began to explore their sexual identities in high school.

Anonymous Contributor

It is definitely more normalized to talk about heterosexual sex than it is to talk about gay sex. I would say it is much less encouraged to talk openly about gay sex and hookups.

Anonymous Contributor

When people are openly discussing hook-up culture, I don’t know how to pitch in because I’ve only ever had one committed partner.

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Chillingly CRONIC... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As much as we want to call ourselves open and accepting of all illnesses, we can’t help but question ourselves when we are describing or complaining about the small things. Lumps and bumps don’t leave behind in halfways. It makes your common cold pale in the hall. That is so many. Do you know what makes more? Passing in the hall.

Even if you are sexually active, you might not have sex with someone new. Some of us just don’t get sex much. Few people (at least at small liberal arts colleges) are judgmental about any aspect of it. Sex is better now than ever!

No other act approaches sex in terms of physical and emotional intimacy. Ideally, all of the sexual partners are having a safe, consensual, and awesome time for as long as they want, and from what I hear, nothing compares to the feelings aroused during the experience. Sex is like biting into an orange slice. You get wet and sticky, your senses kick into overdrive, and afterward, you feel an emotional attachment like no other to the other persons involved.

It is pretty standard practice to not say “I love you” on the first date. It is usually a good way not to ask out a person for a second date. Jumping into a relationship of intimacy so high right of the bat, when you have barely got past the “What’s your favorite ice cream?” stage, is commonly seen as off-putting and unnerving.

Nobody wants to get caught up in a “You should have been there too” situation. And after you say it, the only way you can go up from there is by adding terms of endearment, which really should be removed from the English lexicon as soon as possible anyway.

I approach sex the same way. It is if the most intimate interaction you’ve ever had is with your parents. Only way you can go up from there is by adding terms of endearment, which really should be removed from the English lexicon as soon as possible anyway.

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Nobody wants to get caught up in a “You should have been there too” situation. And after you say it, the only way you can go up from there is by adding terms of endearment, which really should be removed from the English lexicon as soon as possible anyway.
I was scared of physical intimacy. Over the years, I talked to scores of people about their sex lives, their sexual experiences, asking what made them feel safe enough to fully explore and to gain some insight into my own way of dealing with sex. I read “urban” on the internet countless times. I asked people how they can have sex with themselves and it was the first step to ever having sex with someone else. I began to see more and more of my friends share and have sex. Despite their assurances that I would understand it all, I nervously felt left behind and even more self-conscious about my own lack of experience. For a long time, nothing worked. My interest in learning about my body ebbed and flowed throughout the years. I couldn’t help but feel that I was missing the boat. This was because I was terrified of attempting to masturbate me feel safe and understood. And one day, I did. Just after my 22nd birthday, I read masturbat- ing and orgasmed. I even Googled to be sure, as silly as that sounds. A couple days later, I felt it. And I felt great. Eventually, I finally felt I like understood what made me feel safe and that it would take to bring myself to orgasm. I recognize that for some people this knowledge is critical. It isn’t just about sex. Masturbation has a role to play in self-awareness and most intimate connections. It is important to understand that there are different ways to deal with this behavior, especially when this is not the case, often the individual becomes stronger after the experience. It becomes stronger after the experience. Overall, intimacy within the Bachelor franchise is exemplified within this work due to the un- told story of what actually occurs in the Fantasy Suite. Fantasy Suites are an important part of the show because it is also significant in having real sexual chemistry between couples, and contestants within the franchise. 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SEX SURVEY RESULTS

The Bates Student conducted a survey to gauge insight into the sexual health and identities of the Bates College student body. The survey was distributed via class listservs, Facebook groups, and other social media platforms. 340 students encompassing approximately equal sectors of each class year responded to the survey, which was entirely anonymous. The respondents reflect a variety of gender identities and sexual orientations, and offer many different attitudes on sexual encounters and masturba-

tion. 71% of students are sexually active, and 65% have “hooked up” with someone at Bates. More than half of the re-

spondents reported having five or more sexual partners in total. 40% of respondents stated that they masturbate multiple times a week, 22% have multiple times a month, and 5% have sex every day. Another 13% reported that they have sex rarely and 4% do not have sex.

Members of the class of 2023 and 2021 tied in the number of respondents who did not consider themselves “virgins”; the class of 2024 had the fewest. “Virginity is generally something people are not par-

ticularly open about or proud of. When sex is talked about, and hook-ups are talked about, it is much more often by segments of the Bates population that are not having sex,” mentioned a wom-

an who identifies as bisexual. Overall, students are un-

sure whether Bates provides ade-

quate sexual health resources, with 61% of the total re-

spondents and 51% of non-hetero-

sexual respondents declaring they were unsure about the ade-

quacy of Bates’ sexual health resources.

Comments on sexual healthcare at Bates include re-

quests for more LGBTQIAP2+ resources and dissatisfaction with the reproductive care pro-

vided by Bates Health Services. Others also pointed to Bates’ sexual assault related resources as inadequate. For a more comprehensive look at the results of the Sex Survey, The Bates Student has compiled the data in the follow-

ing charts and graphs.

Survey by Sadie Basilia ’23, Eleanor Boyle ’22, Jessica Gross ’23, and Vanessa Paella ’21
Graphs by Sadie Basilia ’23 | Captions by Max Devon ’23 and Elizabeth LaCroix ’23
SEX SURVEY RESULTS

HOW OFTEN DO RESPONDENTS (MEN) HAVE SEX?

- EVERY DAY: 12%
- I AM NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE: 7%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A MONTH: 32%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A WEEK: 21%
- NEVER: 24%
- RARELY: 4%

Comprises all respondents who identify as men, including those who identify as men as well as an additional gender identity. n=138

HOW OFTEN DO NON-MEN RESPONDENTS HAVE SEX?

- EVERY DAY: 13%
- I AM NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE: 4%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A MONTH: 26%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A WEEK: 30%
- NEVER: 23%
- RARELY: 4%

Includes respondents who identify as women, non-binary, gender queer, gender fluid, or trans who do not also identify as men. n=204

HOW OFTEN DO RESPONDENTS (MEN) MASTURBATE?

- EVERY DAY: 3%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A MONTH: 8%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A WEEK: 18%
- NEVER: 53%
- RARELY: 18%

Comprises all respondents who identify as men, including those who identify as men as well as an additional gender identity. n=138

HOW OFTEN DO NON-MEN RESPONDENTS MASTURBATE?

- EVERY DAY: 27%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A MONTH: 39%
- MULTIPLE TIMES A WEEK: 15%
- NEVER: 18%
- RARELY: 1%

Includes respondents who identify as women, non-binary, gender queer, gender fluid, or trans who do not also identify as men. n=204

DO RESPONDENTS FEEL BATES PROVIDES ADEQUATE SEXUAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS OF THEIR GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES?

- NO: 40%
- UNSURE: 44%
- YES: 16%

n=142

DO NON-HETEROSEXUAL RESPONDENTS FEEL BATES PROVIDES ADEQUATE SEXUAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS OF THEIR GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES?

- NO: 29%
- UNSURE: 20%
- YES: 51%

For this survey, non-heterosexual includes all respondents who identified with sexual identities other than straight. n=113

HAVE RESPONDENTS EVER BEEN TESTED FOR A SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION?

- NO: 51%
- UNSURE: 46%
- YES: 3%

96% of respondents who had been tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) tested negative. To learn more about common STIs and STI testing at Bates, check out the infographic on Page 7. n=140

THE NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS REPORTED

- 184: 37
- 261: 67
- 241: 5
- 281: 27
- 301: 81
- 391: 39
- 1: 5

Of the eight students who reported having 21 or more sexual partners, four of the respondents were female-identifying and the other four were male-identifying. n=204
Anonymous Sex Survey Comments

I really enjoyed Sex Week my first year at Bates, as my primary school education hadn’t really taught me enough about how women’s bodies, and even my own body, works.

I really enjoyed Sex Week my first year at Bates, as my primary school education hadn’t really taught me enough about how women’s bodies, and even my own body, works.

More queer resources could be offered.

You’ll get labelled as a slut if you have a lot of partners, or as no fun if you don’t - it’s really toxic. Guys sleep around with as many girls as they can and treat girls as disposable. My friend cared too much about a guy who she had been with and everyone started calling her crazy, just because she didn’t understand the so-called hook-up culture of Bates... having sex but no feelings or attachment is acceptable, apparently.

[Bates is] very straight and cis. As a former member of a certain men’s sports team, I can tell you rape culture is very prominent and laughed off. I think a lot of students are genuinely pretty embarrassed about sex, though this younger generation of zoomers are loud and proud!

People seem to be more or less concerned about each other’s sex lives. Unless there’s tea, of course.

The sex culture at Bates is hyper-focused on hook-up culture through a lens of sexual conquest. When people talk about their sex experiences, they usually just focus on the positive and leave out negative aspects and/or complexities. Most of how I learn about sex is through my friends, and I wish there more more accessible resources. I find myself turning to Google to figure out if something is “normal”... sexual experiences are way more accessible to straight, white people.

[Sex positivity at Bates] depends on the setting - some spaces, teams, etc. are wildly sex positive, and others aren’t.

On my AESOP, one of the first questions asked was whether or not everyone was a virgin. I didn’t know how to answer that question, and it was definitely not a healthy way to be asked it. Next, on frisbee, I heard people talking about their ‘body counts’ constantly. When I applied to be an AESOP leader, the only interview question I was asked was which AESOP leaders I would F***, Marry, and Kill. I’ve eventually found sex positive spaces... those not being the default groups that are easy to find as a first-year.

The Health Center seems to be very negative about STI testing. I have felt pretty uncomfortable there several times, and my friends have said the same. I think people would use that resource more if they felt comfortable going there.

Bates seems to care about the sexual safety and health of its students; condoms are offered in common areas of dorms, and posters discussing sexual education resources can be found.

From what I have experienced, Bates is very open about talking about sex/sexuality and no one is shamed for how much they have (or don’t have) sex.

Guys need more talks and guidance about sexual interactions. I think most people can tell the difference between the obvious right and wrong in [sexual] situations, but more consideration has to be paid to the confusing situations. By providing guidance and various ways to tackle those situations, everyone can feel safer and more content.

I worked in the bakery my first year and got to make penis and vagina cookies. It was awesome.
Bates Health Services (BHS) takes on the role of your at-home doctor’s office—valuing the full support of students as they participate in academics and co-curricular activities. In addition to the general healthcare BHS provides, they also have reproductive healthcare services to support all student healthcare needs.

“Bates Health Services is partnered with Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) to provide healthcare to all students, and we aspire to make students feel welcome and empowered to access our sexual health services,” Brennan Callahan, the Student Health Support Coordinator and Student at Bates, and we as a student body.”

Sexual Health Services Available In-Office

- BHs aims to provide students with accurate sexual health information and to ensure that they have timely access to care for appropriate screening and testing. 
- Treatment is available for common sexual health diagnoses (bacterial vaginosis, chlamydia, syphilis, etc.) through the BHS in-house pharmacy.
- Options are given for contraceptive use and STI/HIV prevention.
- BHs educates students on medications and vaccines for avoiding diseases such as HIV with PrEP, HPV, and Hepatitis.
- Support for students who identify as LGBTQIA+ with their sexual health needs is provided.
- Pregnancy testing and counseling along with other gynecological services are available in-office.
- BHs often collaborates with Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy (SA VA), and other local community services to meet the needs of all patients.

Sexual Health Services Available Out of Office

- BHs can make referrals to CMMC for ultrasounds or other treatments requiring a specialist.
- Abortions are not available in-office, but transport can be provided through the Backoff Express for appointments at Lewiston Family Planning or CMMC.

Accessing Birth Control and Contraception

Step 1: Schedule an Appointment—Call or email BHS to request an appointment with a medical provider to talk about birth control options.

Step 2: Order the Contraception—Depending on the type of option selected, a prescription can be sent to a pharmacy for pick up on the same day (i.e. birth control pills, patches, or rings). If the student is interested in long-acting reversible contraception, such as an IUD or Nexplanon, BHS will order the device and set up an appointment for placement when it arrives.

Step 3: Follow-Up Appointment—This is only required if the student is interested in an IUD or Nexplanon, and during this visit, the device will be implanted at BHS.

Step 4: Attend any Follow-Up Appointments—These are only necessary if the student attends a treatment for STIs at Health Services.

Testing and Treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections

Step 1: Schedule an Appointment—Call or email BHS to request an appointment for STI testing. You may also find an at-home STI testing kit location on campus and drop it off at BHS.

Step 2: Your Appointment—BHS medical staff will ask questions during your appointment about your symptoms and then determine the appropriate method for testing.

Step 3: Get your Results—Results typically come back within a couple of days and BHs nurses will review the results before releasing the student. Students can also set up the CMMC Patient Portal to access results online.

Step 4: Attend any Follow-Up Appointments—These are only necessary if the student tests positive. BHs will schedule a follow-up appointment with a provider to access treatment for STIs at Health Services.

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is one of the most common STIs, especially among teens and young adults. The bacteria that causes the STI spreads through vaginal, anal, and oral sex, and can infect your cervix. Since gonorrhea generally produces no symptoms, testing is necessary to diagnose the STI. Antibiotics are given to cure the infection and mitigate long-term health conditions.

Herpes

Herpes is another common STI caused by a virus that produces sores on your mouth or genital areas—though it can live in your body for years without causing symptoms. Herpes is spread through skin-to-skin contact such as kissing, vaginal, and oral sex. While there is no cure for Herpes, medication can mitigate transmission during sex.

Public Lice

Also known as crab lice, public lice are parasitic creatures that attach to hair primarily in the pubic and genital areas. They largely spread through sexual skin-to-skin encounters, but also through kissing or other intimate interactions. Public lice leads to scratching and itching in your genital areas, but can be easily treated with over-the-counter medicines.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a common bacterial STI in the US, with nearly 3 million cases each year. The STI is most common in adults aged 14 to 24, and spreads primarily through vaginal, anal, and oral sex. There are generally no symptoms for a Chlamydia infection, so testing is necessary to diagnose the STI. However, Chlamydia can be treated with a short course of antibiotics.

Common Sexually Transmitted Infections

Millions of Americans are infected with Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) each year. While most STIs are easy to treat, wearing protection such as condoms and frequent testing are important tools to mitigate preventable spread. Bates Health Services offers free STI testing for all students, and encourages regular testing for everyone aged 16-20 who are sexually active.

Using condoms or other forms of protection during vaginal, anal, or oral sex—as well as frequent testing—protects yourself and your sexual partners against STIs.

Bates Health Services
Sexual Resources

Elizabeth LaCroix, Assistant News Editor

Bates students, and we aspire to make students feel welcome and empowered to access our sexual health services,” Brennan Callahan, the Student Health Support Coordinator and Specialist at Bates, told The Student. Appointments can be scheduled for gynecological and sexual health services with doctors (MDs and DOs), family nurse practitioners, and registered nurses (RNs). Students can call BHs at (207) 786-6199 or email them at healthservices@bates.edu to schedule an appointment.

Constructing an Equitable and Judgement Free Zone

BHS understands that college is a unique time to receive health information and to ensure that they have timely access to care for appropriate screening and testing. Typically, asymptomatic tests only screen for gonorrhea and chlamydia. If a student is experiencing symptoms, the student should see a provider to determine the range of STI screening. Practically, asymptomatic tests only screen for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

Testing and Treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections

Step 1: Schedule an Appointment—Call or email BHs to request an appointment for STI testing. You may also find an at-home STI testing kit location on campus and drop it off at BHs.

Step 2: Your Appointment—BHs medical staff will ask questions during your appointment about your symptoms and then determine the appropriate method for testing.

Step 3: Get your Results—Results typically come back within a couple of days and BHs nurses will review the results before releasing the student. Students can also set up the CMMC Patient Portal to access results online.

Step 4: Attend any Follow-Up Appointments—These are only necessary if the student tests positive. BHs will schedule a follow-up appointment with a provider to access treatment for STIs at Health Services.
To Be a Woman Loving Women at Bates

Bates Peer Health Sex Week Schedule

WEDNESDAY

CONDOM CASBS

Cabs with condoms will drive throughout campus handing out safer sex supplies and information.

NOT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SEX ED WORKSHOP

A program centered around pleasure, Consent, and all the different ways to have sex. -info or partner. Bring all sex supplies.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT:

What is Sex Positivity?

A post about the basics of what sex positivity means.

FRIDAY

CONDOM CASBS

CABINCS IN OURS

Commons Sex-week inspired condoms provided by the Bates Rafters.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT:

How to be a sex toper

A post and live discussion about the ins and outs of purchasing a sex toy.

THURSDAY

CONDOM CASBS

TAKE-HOME STI TEST KITS

STI kits will be provided in multiple locations for students to pick up, use at home, and drop off at Health Services.

EXPLORING SEXUAL IDENTITIES DISCUSSION

This program is designed for people to discuss their understandings. This program will include discussion on sexuality.

SATURDAY

CONDOM CASBS

SEX WEEK TRIVIA

A fill-trivia night that tests your knowledge about sex.

Communities for LGBTQIAP2+ Bates Students

SPARQ! & OIE

The Office of Intercultural Education (OIE) and Bates’ LGBTQIAP2+ students together hosts SPARQ! for the OIE. He and SPARQ! peer mentors Olivia Eaton ‘22 and Topher Castaneda ‘20 help to advise LGBTQIAP2+ students.

SPARQ! is a program that is being developed by the OIE to help better support LGBTQIAP2+ students at Bates. Castaneda said that SPARQ! is a group of gatherings such as brunches and book club meetings where LGBTQIAP2+ students can meet similarly minded Batesies.

“Know it’s intimidating, but I always like to encourage (LGBTQIAP2+) students to come in the OIE,” Eaton said. “Come talk to me, we can just chat, or if you want to take a load off and express all of your troubles, I’m here for that too. I know it’s scary, but please reach out to people because there are people who care about you and want to hear what you’re feeling.” Students interested in learning more about SPARQ! programming can email Castaneda at castaned@bates.edu.

OutFront

“OutFront is a student-led LGBTQIAP2+ club at Bates. OutFront organizes social activities and campus events, such as dances and game nights. The club additionally supports political activism surrounding queer identity. Contact Claudia Jimenez ‘22, club president, for more information at jimenezc@bates.edu.”

Vanessa Pantella ‘21

Lewiston Family Planning: A Judgement Free Zone

The staff at Lewiston Family Planning recognizes that the healthcare they provide is often very personal to the patient. “Our staff is amazing...professional...yet caring. We all have a sense of humor so we aren’t a cold, clinical environment,” Hayes said.

She also added that each staff member does their best to put the patient at ease and give them the personalized attention they desire. In reference to her own guiding principles as a nurse practitioner, Hayes follows the Maya Angelou quote, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” This is reflected in the overall goal at Lewiston Family Planning: to make each patient feel heard, valued, and cared for.

Anonymous Contributor

Coming to a college like Bates, known for diversity and acceptance, from a rural and mostly conservative high school, I had thought things would be different. I came out to a small number of people and I lived in Trump country - I could never take the risk of coming out to more people. But maybe here, things could be better, right?

I found a group of friends on campus quickly, which seemed great at first, but soon there was a problem. They assumed I was straight, because they all were. They asked me if I had a boyfriend, what kind of guy I liked, did I date, etc. I shared that I had been in a few dates with “people” but nothing had ever really worked out. I knew I had to tell them eventually, and a few weeks into the semester, I did. And I’m not saying it was bad, because it wasn’t. Things were awkward, but okay. I wasn’t hated. I wasn’t excluded, but I can’t really say I was accepted either.

As time went on, I told more people as it felt appropriate, and I was asked if I could bring the person I was dating to family events. They asked me if I could bring the person I thought they would kick me out?

my use of the word “people” on a few dates with guys (recall didn’t like men? Hadn’t I been “good” friend. Was I sure that I wasn’t excluded, but I can’t say I was accepted either. I wasn’t excluded, but I can’t say I was accepted either.

As time went on, and as we got to know each other, I found a group of friends that I had been looking for, that I was so happy to be a part of. They cared about me, they loved me, they showed me that I was not as long as other students. But maybe here, possibly?

I’m not sure if I’ll ever feel completely comfortable at Bates during my time here, not as long as other students can’t understand that my queer-ness is not for them. It’s for me.

Katy Boehm /The Bates Student

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