**SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY THROUGHOUT HISTORY**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and related identities have been present in various forms throughout history. All cultures have included, with varying degrees of acceptance, individuals who practice same-sex relations as well as those whose gender, gender identity and gender expression challenge prevailing norms, and many cultures still do.

**United States**

- **16th-17th Century:** In Lisbon, communities of men and women were known to have same-sex relationships, and were targeted by the Inquisition.
- **18th-19th Century:** Among the Igbo people of Nigeria (and parts of Benin), a married woman with independent wealth may choose to cross-dress and other behaviour blurring the lines of social structure. Other indigenous peoples in the region have similar traditions.

**Samoa**

- **19th Century:** The ancient Egyptian royal servants Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep are believed to be among the first recorded same-sex couple in history, as reflected by the drawings in their tomb.

**Mainland China**

- **16th-17th Century:** Among the Nandu people, men may marry many women. The older generally takes on a traditionally male role and is considered a "female husband". The younger may become pregnant by a man but the legal and social father of the children will be the female husband.

**India**

- **5th Century BCE - 6th Century CE:** In Persian poetry, the notion of Shahed (male beauty as testimony to the power of God) was frequently used by many poets, including the Persian poet Saadi Shirazi. The Buddhist term Mettā, meaning mental union and loving-kindness, is used to identify transgender people (as well as same-sex couples) as an accepted part of Nepalese culture since ancient times.

**Ancient Greece**

- **6th Century BCE - 6th Century CE:** Male homosexuality was an accepted phenomenon, practiced by high-status individuals usually with younger men. The poet Sappho wrote about her affection and desire for other women. The philosopher Plato spoke of a third sex, which was both male and female, as part of original human nature.

**Persian Empire**

- **5th Century BCE - 1st Century CE:** Among the Bugis ethnic group, native to the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, recognizes three sexes (female, male and hermaphrodite), four genders (women, men, transmen = calabai, and transwomen = calalai), and a fifth meta-gender group, the bissu.

**Korea**

- **8th-9th Century:** Islamic Hadith (report of the deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad) state that the Prophet of Islam issued rulings regarding the personal rights of gender variant people identified as mahramatush, especially concerning inheritance.

**Portugal**

- **15th-17th Century:** Michelangelo described same-sex love in his poems, although these references were later edited out. Ancient marble statues unearthed in Rome depicting intersex people inspired a number of Renaissance artists.

**Italy**

- **16-18th Century:** In Lisbon, communities of men and women were known to have same-sex relationships, and were targeted by the Inquisition.
- **17th Century:** In Lisbon, communities of men and women were known to have same-sex relationships, and were targeted by the Inquisition.

**Russia**

- **16th-17th Century:** During the early Renaissance, “masculine love” was a term used to describe male homosexuality (also used in France and England). Michelangelo described same-sex love in his poems, although these references were later edited out. Ancient marble statues unearthed in Rome depicting intersex people inspired a number of Renaissance artists.

**United Nations**

- **19th Century:** In the Maya culture of the Yucatan Peninsula, sexual relations between men were accepted as part of the social structure. Other indigenous peoples in the region have similar traditions.

**Ethiopia**

- **6th Century BCE - 6th Century CE:** The indigenous Chukchi people in Siberia identified seven genders in addition to male and female.