

I didn't think I was an alcoholic, I didn't drink every day, to the outside world I was a fully functioning working mother. I was a binge drinker. My whole life was a farce. I couldn't identify as being a lesbian alcoholic – someone who was so socially unacceptable. My need for acceptance overpowered everything else. As a consequence, I could not be ME. Because I was denying the very existence of that person. The love and acceptance that I found at GLADS right from the first meeting, together with my willingness to accept others regardless, has freed me to accept myself and to even like myself. For me, the people at GLADS are my chosen family.

—Jenny

The thing that impresses me most about GLADS is that it is a group of down to earth, honest individuals. There is no crap. I used to kid myself that I couldn't be an alcoholic. I was a successful professional with a car, house, job etc., but the longer I attended meetings, the more I realised that although we may have travelled different paths, we all arrived at the same place... a realisation that alcohol was a destructive force in our lives. The honest and accepting environment of GLADS helped me to not only accept my alcoholism, but I have also accepted my sexuality. Once the fog of grog cleared, many aspects of my life fell into place and every day in every way it gets better and better.

—Marg

GLADS is for

- gays
- lesbians
- alcohol problems
- drug problems
- being honest for yourself
- being respected and supported
- making changes you want
- setting your own limits
- talking and listening
- not being pressured or judged
- confidentiality
- relief

Meetings alternate—

- identification and sharing
- issues - chosen from the group for understanding and growth.

GLADS

Gay and Lesbian
Alcohol and Drug
Support Group

GLADS
WEDNESDAY 7:30PM

Stonewall Medical Centre
52 Newmarket Road
Windsor QLD 4030
Ph 3857 1222

A place where you can be
honest and accepted

GLADS stands for Gay and Lesbian Alcohol and Drug Support Group. It started in 1991.

It is a well known fact that drugs and alcohol play a more significant role in the Gay and Lesbian sub-culture than the larger community, so it is only logical then, that some may develop a dependence on alcohol or other drugs.

The emotional stress of modern Gay life—relationships, work and just keeping it all together—can be very hard to cope with alone.

GLADS was formed out of a need within the community for support in these areas, helping us to develop pride in ourselves and to manage our lives.

Some personal experiences of GLADS—

Growing up in my family was non-supportive. I craved attention and felt shy lonely and unloved. I didn't fit in anywhere. I knew I was gay but had to hide my true feelings. All I wanted was acceptance. I used alcohol and drugs and my relationships to make myself feel good. Eventually things got out of control. I was addicted and felt even worse. Now that I'm sober I can be myself. I have hope today and am learning to express how I honestly feel. The group gives me support and acceptance. I no longer feel alone. Life is getting better all the time.

—Scott

Tony – Heterosexual Male – came to GLADS 12 months ago. I am an alcoholic drug addict on a methadone program. I have experienced compassion and understanding in a non-

Judgmental environment. What a relief to be able to share with a group of special people.

—Tony

My early sober days were spent interpreting stories told at predominantly heterosexual recovery program meetings. Without these programs and mainstream counselling facilities, I believe I would not have stayed sober. I am eternally grateful to these traditional self help groups, whose members helped me find sobriety, but identifying with their stories was difficult at times and I felt the need to relate to other lesbians and gay men. To be honest with myself and others about my relationship with same sex partners set me free. Not having to say "they" instead of "she" or referring to my partner by substituting a male name, helped me come to terms with my old "people pleasing" behavior. I could be authentic and claim some much-needed self-esteem. The gay and lesbian alcohol and drug service provided me with the opportunity to be myself and learn to trust in a relaxed, familiar atmosphere. It allows me to openly support other lesbians and gay men and to receive their understanding, wisdom and love.

—Barb

I found GLADS to be very helpful in getting my emotional side and general attitudes to living straightened out. For years I drank to excess, popped pills and generally tried to escape from gender dysphoria. Eventually I came out with the assistance of surgery and finally could live my life as a lesbian and with the help of GLADS I am learning how to live and enjoy life free from alcohol and drugs and be more open of my sexuality regardless of my peers who regard me as rather strange, but GLADS accept me as I am.

—Leslie

GLADS provided me a compassionate and nonjudgmental service helping me to cope with an uncertain future whilst I resolved to do something about my addiction.

When I first started to attend GLADS the group helped me to recognize and eventually resolve many complex personal problems, such as being Gay, which I was facing during a decidedly uneasy period of my life. I still attend today. With the support of the group, I was able to maintain my resolve to be free from a dependency which had progressed very quickly to a stage where I was very nearly out of control. Thank you GLADS.

It took me a while to made progress with the way I was feeling regarding my addictions but after some initial meetings I felt ready to work through my problems for Me. The honesty and acceptance of other members gave me the opportunity of seeing where I was going wrong with my attitude to drug and alcohol abuse.

For me, I needed the comfort of GLADS to help me to resolve my tendency toward binge drinking. Not only that, but I was also able to address sexuality and my self-esteem as underlying reasons for drinking too, too much. Today thanks to GLADS, I haven't felt the need to drink.

For years, I had willfully wrecked my life and everyone else's who had come near me. For me to actually stop and take the time necessary to have a good look at my life and the patterns within it, I attended GLADS meetings. Within a period of time I had developed the strength to deal with my addiction and the resolve to say "No" to the things which in time I know would have eventually killed me. Today my physical, mental and spiritual health are all of great importance to me thanks to the progress I made while attending the group.

- **Anonymous**