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Arab Emirates 'cure' video under fire from LGBT activists

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A six-minute YouTube video, which shows a gay youth being 'scrubbed clean' of his sexuality, has shocked and outraged the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The video entitled 'Be Yourself' is described as a 'tutorial' which shows how gays can be 'cured.'

Five young men are depicted in the video, one is portrayed as a visibly shy effeminate guy with long hair. He is contrasted by the macho-like manner of the four other men.

Two of the men invite the effeminate man inside a nearby villa where they give him a 'make-over.' His hands and face are violently scrubbed and his nails and hair are cut.

He's told to change his personality.

"The video signifies the level of challenge, we, the UAE LGBT community, have ahead of us," Abdullah, 24, told the editor of Gay Middle East. "We don't merely have to change the views of the government but also society itself. It angers me no end, but it also saddens me, this video would have been devastating if my 16-year-old self had watched it."

Critics call the video "ugly, hurtful and very dangerous." They also challenge the feminine stereotype used to represent then entire population of homosexual men.

Homosexuality is illegal in UAE and is viewed as westernized and something that can be changed. Psychologists and psychiatrists in the UAE regard being gay as a psychological disturbance.

"We will challenge those beliefs and misconceptions one person at a time, said Abdullah. "And if we don't change them we will reach to their hearts."

On the Web: gaymiddleeast.com