

## Study: Homophobia equals self-phobia?

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ROCHESTER, NY -- A new series of psychology studies indicate homophobia is more pronounced in individuals with an unacknowledged attraction to the same sex and who grew up with authoritarian parents who forbade such desires.

The research documents the role that both parenting and sexual orientation play in the formation of homophobic attitudes and bias. It further shed light on the hypocrisy of anti-gay public figures who are caught engaging in same-sex sexual actions, such as evangelist Ted Haggard.

"We laugh at or make fun of such blatant hypocrisy, but in a real way, these people may often themselves be victims of repression and experience exaggerated feelings of threat," said co-author Richard Ryan, professor of psychology at the University of Rochester. "Homophobia is not a laughing matter. It can sometimes have tragic consequences."

The paper includes four separate experiments, conducted in the United States and Germany, with each study involving an average of 160 college students.

Across all the studies, participants with supportive and accepting parents were more in touch with their implicit sexual orientation.

The research study conducted by a team from the University of Rochester, the University of Essex, England, and the University of California in Santa Barbara will be published in the April issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

From materials provided by University of Rochester available on Newswise.