

**1. Stability was articulated as a foundational building block for the achievement and maintenance of long lasting committed gay relationships.**

*The attribute of stability, which the Phase II online questionnaire showed to be the common denominator of participant descriptions of partner, caregivers/parents and relationships, was accompanied by several other similar attributes, namely permanence, consistency, self sufficiency, empathy (“being understanding of others”) and shared values.* These same attributes were evident in the Phase III interview narratives, wherein participants spoke of—among other things—the deepening of trust over time; their relationships’ endurance of hardships; mutual loyalty; their paths to knowing and accepting each other’s particularities; and their experiences of safety, security and comfort in their relationships.

Of the study sample (N=122), 105 (86.1% of 122) were raised in “traditional” two-parent households with one male and one female caregiver; 95 participants of that 105 participant sub-sample (90.5% of 105) strongly agreed that their female parents were “permanent and stable” parts of their lives; 65 participants (61.9% of 105) strongly agreed that their male parents were “permanent and stable” parts of their lives; and 72 participants (68.6% of 105) strongly agreed that they imagined their parents would have been “together forever.” The sheer number of participants who associated the attributes of permanence and stability with their female parents might suggest that the attribute of stability, for which participants searched and found in their partners and that characterized participant relationships with those partners, was more a product of participant relationships with their female parents than the relationship between the participants’ parents.

Although stability has been given the major focus here—because it is a highly rated attribute shared among participant descriptions of parent, partner and relationships—it is important to give attention to the fact that the top two attributes for female parent and real partner were exactly the same and occurred in the same order. “Extremely compassionate” ranked number one, with 86 participants (82.0% of 105) making that attribution to their female parents, and 103 participants (84.4% of 122) making that attribution to their partners. “Extremely stable” was ranked second with 78 participants (74.3% of 105) attributing it to their female parents, and 100 participants (84.4% of 122) attributing it to their partners.