**M2 – Gay Son**

**Interviewer:** When did you realize that your son is gay?

**M2:** I knew My son was gay (different) from a young age since he played with female things such as dolls. He was also attracted to girly things like if we go to Toysrus, he would go to the dolls section, and so forth.

**Interviewer:** As you have said, at what age did he disclose his sexual orientation?

**M2:** He told me at the age of 13. We (both father and mother) could see that something was different from a very young age, from 5 years old ... He played with toys, he would only be attracted to girl toys, not to boys' toys… he was more feminine…

**Interviewer:** Did you ever suspect him of being bullied at school?

**M2:** I received a call from the school, there were fights at school which he was involved in. But they never said it was because due to his sexuality. Only when we engaged with him regarding his sexuality he informed us about the bullying and teasing based on his sexuality. This was in High School, I think grade 9. He told us he was being called names. Our son told us that the teachers and school knew he was bullied because of his sexuality, but they did nothing. They (the school) never mentioned the fact that it was due to his sexuality. This already happened when he was in the lower grades in high school. For example bathrooms, he never felt comfortable going to the boys' bathrooms. He went to the girls' bathrooms. My son was scared that if he went to the boy’s bathrooms they would close the doors and hit him or something.

**Interviewer:** How did this impact his academics at school?

**M2:** We changed schools often. He never asked to change. However, we decided it was best”.

**Interviewer:** Was there any communication from the school to say that there was any bullying taking place?

**M2:** When we had conversations with the school, they wouldn’t touch on the issue of his sexuality… they saw him being a difficult and a rebellious child…I do believe that they all were related to his sexual orientation or stemmed from him being gay. If I knew what was going on for sure, I could have provided him with more support and could have done more. They were focused on him being naughty or acting out. I would have wanted to help him with the cause of the problem. Instead of them just saying that he is naughty I wanted them to talk to me about the real issue in order for us to get a solution and help my child together”

**Interviewer:** How do you think learners from diverse sexual orientations can be supported?

**M2:** It will be a good thing if the parents and the schools have some sort of communication around these issues. Together we can then seek a solution to the problem, and the bullying. I would have wanted the school to teach the children about these issues. The problem is that many children don’t open up about to their parents or the school so the parents and school can’t help each other”.