



Lesbian Family Life Cycle

Suzanne Slater

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Until now, lesbian families have had little help in identifying the stages of their couple relationships or recognizing the often stressful periods of relational transition. In this first-of-its-kind book, psychotherapist Suzanne Slater describes the joys and stresses common to lesbian families and provides a five-stage model of the development of lesbian couple relationships, from formation through old age and death.

Drawing on sixteen years of clinical experience and research, Slater shows that lesbian families with and without children have created their own richly diverse family patterns, extending both the parameters of coupled life and the very definition of what constitutes "family." She describes the tasks, challenges, and accomplishments particular to each stage of the family life cycle, and helps couples distinguish between normal developmental stresses and the unique difficulties of particular couples. She considers in detail lesbian couples' interaction with their original families, with the straight world, and with the lesbian communities of which they are a part. Through a range of examples and cases, Slater addresses how lesbian families are affected by their position in a homophobic culture and details the unique coping mechanisms that different lesbian couples have created. Most important, she emphasizes the sources of fulfillment common to many lesbian families.

In addition to educating lesbian couples and those close to them, this book will prepare psychotherapists to design more effective and informed therapeutic strategies. Instead of relying on theory based on heterosexual experience, clinicians can now base their interventions on what is normal for lesbian family life. *The Lesbian Family Life Cycle* will be invaluable reading for lesbian family members, their friends and relatives, and clinicians in a variety of helping professions.

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