

LGBTQI2S Tip Sheet for Educators

Vocabulary

- 1. Sexual orientation:** refers to a person's emotional and sexual attraction. It means who we desire sexually, with whom we want to become intimate, and with whom we want to form emotional relationships. May be lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual.
- 2. Gender Expression:** refers to the ways in which we each manifest masculinity or femininity.
- 3. Gender Identity** refers to a person's internal, deeply-felt sense of ^f_{SEP} being either male, female, something other, or in between.
- 4. LGBTQI2S = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex, Two-Spirit**
- 5. Lesbian:** a woman who forms sexual and loving relationships with other women
- 6. Gay:** a person who forms sexual and loving relationships with those of the same gender; often used to refer to men only, but many women also use this term to identify themselves.
- 7. Bisexual:** an individual, male or female, who is attracted to and may form sexual and loving relationships with both men and women; does not usually mean non-monogamy.
- 8. Transgender:** a person whose gender identity, gender presentation or expression, and/or physical appearance or anatomy do not fit into conventional expectations of male and female. If a person transitions from male to female, or from female to male with the help of hormones and/or surgery, she or he may self-identify as **Transsexual**. **Transx**, **Trans***, **Non-binary**, and **Gender Queer** are other terms that are currently being embraced as forms of gender expression.
- 9. Queer:** Sometimes used as an umbrella term for LGBTQI2S people. Sometimes embraced by those who do not feel like a single category within LGBTQI2S accurately describes them. Sometimes spoken as an insult against LGBTQI2S people.
- 10. Intersex:** A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- 11. Two-Spirit:** an umbrella term sometimes used for Indigenous North Americans who fulfill one of many mixed gender roles.
- 12. Heterosexism:** a system of attitudes, bias, and discrimination in favour of opposite-sex sexuality and relationships. It can include the presumption that everyone is heterosexual or that opposite-sex attractions and relationships are the only norm and therefore superior. It may be an unconscious act or one that is actively practiced.
- 13. Homophobia:** fear and hatred of lesbian and gay people, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence.
- 14. Transphobia:** An irrational fear of, and/or hostility towards, people who are transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms.
- 15. Cisgender:** a term for people who have a gender identity that matches the sex that they were assigned at birth.

Rationale: Why is it important to educate against homophobia?

- 1. It is an act of care to your students.** Care is central to the teaching profession.
- 2. It's the law.** Students, staff and community members enjoy equality, rights as well as protection against discrimination and harassment related to a number of areas, including

sexual orientation. Legal protection also calls on us to be responsible to one another to be able to identify, address and prevent instances of exclusion that are related to homophobia and heterosexism. (see The Ontario Human Rights Code and The Accepting Schools Act)

Tips for Classrooms and Schools

1. Don't wait until a homophobic incident occurs; ensure course content reflects a balanced approach to family structures, and diversity within LGBTTQI2S communities.
2. Lay some ground rules when approaching discussions involving family structure, homophobia, heterosexism and/or LGBTTQI2S experiences. Such issues can harbour sensitivity and can consequently be very difficult. ^[L]_[SEP]
3. Don't let a gay joke, the word "fag" or describing something as, "That's so gay," go unchecked/unchallenged
4. Remember humility; many of us have used such words before we learned more.
5. If teaching about famous LGBTTQI2S people and their work, include their sexual orientation in the autobiographical information you provide (e.g. Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Alan Turing, Sally Ride, Mark Tewksbury etc.).
6. Organize anti-homophobia workshops for faculty and students.
7. Bring in guest speakers that reflect diverse perspectives and experiences within the LGBTTQI2S communities.
8. Provide literary and visual representations of LGBTTQI2S people and culture in your classroom and college.
9. Seek out and make friends with other faculty and administrators who are interested in social justice and equity.
10. Laughing in relation to sexuality does not necessarily mean students are being hurtful. It could mean they're nervous. Talking about sexuality often makes people nervous. However, such laughter can feel hurtful. Is there a way you can ask about the laughter and open a discussion?
11. Incorporate case studies, examples and scenarios that ^[L]_[SEP] reflect various family structures and that draw on LGBTTQI2S experiences, in ways that are age-appropriate.

Selected Internet Resources

www.mygsa.ca Resources for Canadian LGBT education
www.glsen.org Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
AIDS but also offers anti-homophobia resources & schoolworkshops)
triangleprogram.ca high school for LGBT students in Toronto area
www.the519.org The 519 Church Street Community Centre (Toronto-based community centre servicing many LGBT organizations
www.queensu.ca/positivespace how to set up a positive space program at your school
www.gsanetwork.org Gay Straight Alliance
www.eagle.ca Canadian LGBT Rights Organization
www.pflagcanada.ca Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays