

 **What is homophobia?**

* By definition, homophobia is the dislike of, irrational fear and/ or prejudice against homosexuality.
* Homophobia, can be observed in different manifestations such as discrimination, and violence.
* Homophobia can also be observed towards specific groups, such as lesbophobia (which is specific to lesbians) or transphobia (which is specific to transgender folks).
* The origins of homophobia are often associated with religious beliefs and cultural norms.
* Homophobia can also lead to hate crimes.

**What can we do to eradicate homophobia?**

1. Know your rights. We must continue education on The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, 18 U.S.C. § 249, which makes it a federal crime to willfully cause bodily injury, or attempt to do so using a dangerous weapon, because of the victim’s actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin. The Act also extends federal hate crime prohibitions to crimes committed because of the actual or perceived religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of any person, only where the crime affected interstate or foreign commerce or occurred within federal special maritime and territorial jurisdiction.
2. We must engage in community conversations, to ensure we are creating safe spaces for LGBT folks, especially youth.
3. We need to continue to create spaces were family members can receive the education and support necessary to support their LGBT family member.

<https://www.justice.gov/crt/hate-crime-laws>

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homophobia