



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>



Homophobia and self-esteem

- As a result of the general homophobia, LGBT folks can manifest what is known as internalized homophobia. Internalized homophobia is defined as the involuntary belief by lesbians and gay men that the homophobic lies, stereotypes and myths about them are true.
- Study shows that internalized homophobia will have a negative impact on a person's self-esteem, especially if that person is not yet out as LGBT or believe that doesn't have the support to come out as LGBT.
- Internalized homophobia can also force LGBT folks to imitate heteronormative models that may not be appropriate or that can actually expose folks to high-risk behaviors that may include substance abuse.

What can we do to increase self-esteem in LGBT folks?

1. Seek LGBT friendly places, centers, houses where you can be free to be who you are
2. Engage with your local PFLAG chapter. PFLAG (Parents and friends of Lesbians and Gays) is the nation's largest family and ally organization, the first and largest organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies.
3. Seek LGBT support groups
4. Seek mental health services if needed.

<http://www.culturalbridgestojustice.org/programs/homophobia/internalized-homophobia>

<https://pflag.org/about>



Coming Out: Living authentically as LGBTQ

- What it means? Coming out is when a person decides to reveal an important part of who they are with someone in their life. For many LGBTQ people, this involves sharing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Coming out is a personal decision. There is not right or wrong way to do it. A person can come out at any age and do it through different ways:
 - Calling someone on the phone
 - Sending a text
 - Sending an email
 - Writing a letter
 - Talking with someone in person
- LGBT Youth that come out to their immediate families are more likely to report being happy than those who are not out.
- 9 in 10 LGBT youth are out to their close friends.
- 26% of LGBT youth say their biggest problems are not feeling accepted by their family, trouble at school/bullying, and fear to be out/open.
- 4 in 10 LGBT youth say the community in which they live is not accepting of LGBT people.
- About half (53%) of LGBT Latinx youth are out to their immediate family; more than a quarter (29%) are out to their extended family and only 17% are out to their doctors.

What can we do?

1. If someone comes out to you, make that individual feel heard, seen and respected by saying something like “Thank you so much for sharing this with me.”
2. Reiterate your care and love and ask what you can do to provide support.
3. Ask for permission before sharing this information with someone else.
4. If you are planning to come out, there is not perfect time and place to do it but we encourage you to choose a time when you are relaxed and willing to listen and a place where you feel safe (it can be a public space or at home).
 - a. Unfortunately, coming out doesn't always go according our plans. It could be efficient to prepare a back-up plan for housing, food, trans-



portation and school in case it's needed.

5. Either, if you are out living authentically or if you are a LGBTQ ally and supporter, Celebrate National Coming Out Day (Sunday, October 11th, 2020) it will motivate others to come out and will increase visibility for the LGBTQ community and Allies.
6. If you are having a hard time coming out or processing that someone came out to you. We invite you to join individual counseling or support groups such as “El amor hace la familia.”- a spanish speaking PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Gay and Lesbians) support group in NYC, or look for your local PFLAG chapter.
7. Join as a volunteer for LGBTQ Community based organizations. Share time, ideas and smiles with community members.

https://www.thetrevorproject.org/trvr_support_center/coming-out/

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Coming-Out-Handbook.pdf>

<https://www.hrc.org/youth-report/view-and-share-statistics>

[https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/LatinoYouthReport-FINAL.pdf?
_ga=2.267891022.1918887848.1587847319-1099392535.1587847319](https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/LatinoYouthReport-FINAL.pdf?_ga=2.267891022.1918887848.1587847319-1099392535.1587847319)

Homophobia and Family



According to research conducted by Pediatric Clinics of North America:

- Parent-child attachment has implications for developing healthy relationships later in life.
- LGBT youth may experience a disruption in parent-child attachment if they are rejected based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Parental rejection of LGBT youth negatively affects youths' identity and health.
- Parental acceptance of LGBT youth is crucial to ensure that youth develop a healthy sense of self.

What can we do?

- Identify people as support system (chosen families)
- Engage with your local organizations that accommodate the needs you might have with family. PFLAG (Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and The Trevor Project (Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention).
- If possible, educate yourself and your family about doubts they might have about the LGBT Community.
- Create a back-up plan, which may include saving money or identifying a friend or relative's place where you could stay if things get worse familywise.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5127283/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/05/homophobic-transphobic-parents-abusive-homes-lgbt-kids>

Homophobia and Schools

According to Parents & Families of Gay, Lesbian



- LGBT students at schools with comprehensive policies on bullying and harassment are much more likely to report harassment to school authorities who, in turn, were more likely to respond effectively.
- LGBT students are twice as likely to say that they were not planning on completing high school or going on to college.
- Nearly a fifth of students are physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation and over a tenth because of their gender expression.
- About two-thirds of LGBT students reported having ever been sexually harassed (e.g., sexual remarks made, being touched inappropriately) in school in the past year.
- The average GPA for students who were frequently physically harassed because of their sexual orientation was half a grade lower than that of other students.

Schools should be a young person's primary center for learning, growing, and building a foundation for success in the world. Growing up and getting through high school can be challenging for any student, but LGBT youth too often face additional obstacles of harassment, abuse, and violence.

What can we do?

Anyone can make schools safer for LGBT students no matter what their role is; Students, Teachers, Administrator or Guidance counselor or a Parent. PFLAG offers 5 opportunities to create change for each of these roles here: <https://www.pflagnyc.org/safeschools/fiveways>

We would like to highlight at least one of those for each of the roles:

- Students: Watch what you say: Don't use words associated with being LGBT as euphemisms for stupid and explain to friends and peers who do, why they shouldn't.
- Teachers: Stop hate speech in your classroom. Speak out if you hear a student in your class or in the halls using words like "fag", "dyke", or "gay" as put-downs or insults.



- Administrator or Guidance Counselors: Meet with teachers and parents to help them learn about the issues that their students, children, or their children's peers may be facing as a LGBT person.
- Parents: Let your children know that you accept them, their friends, and their peers, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Make your home a supportive and open space.

<http://www.pflagnyc.org/safeschools/statistics>
<https://www.pflagnyc.org/safeschools/fiveways>
<https://www.pflagnyc.org/safeschools/moreinfo>

Homophobia and the Workplace

According to research by the Human Rights Campaign:

- 46% of LGBT+ workers say they are closeted at work, compared to 50% in HRCF's groundbreaking 2008 [Degrees of Equality](#) report;



- 1-in-5 LGBT+ workers report having been told or had coworkers imply that they should dress in a more feminine or masculine manner;
- 53% of LGBT+ workers report hearing jokes about lesbian or gay people at least once in a while;
- 31% of LGBT+ workers say they have felt unhappy or depressed at work;
- The top reason LGBT+ workers don't report negative comments they hear about LGBTQ people to a supervisor or human resources: **They don't think anything would be done about it** – and they don't want to hurt their relationships with coworkers.

What can employers do to address homophobia at work?

1. Revise policies and procedures manual to ensure policies are inclusive and zero tolerance policies are in place.
2. Conduct LGBT sensitivity trainings
3. Ensure there is space for dialogue at all levels in the agency.

Note: No Southern States have LGBT+ protection for employment, housing, and public accommodations.

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/a-workplace-divided-understanding-the-climate-for-lgbtq-workers-nationwide>

Homophobia and Civil Engagement (The Equality Act)

- Despite significant steps forward, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Americans lack basic legal protections in states across the country. The patchwork nature of current laws leaves millions of people subject to



uncertainty and potential discrimination that impacts their safety, their families, and their day-to-day lives.

- Our nation’s civil rights laws protect people on the basis of race, color, national origin, and in most cases, sex, disability, and religion. But federal law does not provide consistent non-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The need for these protections is clear—nearly two-thirds of LGBTQ Americans report having experienced discrimination in their personal lives.
- The Equality Act would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service.
- Decades of civil rights history show that civil rights laws are effective in decreasing discrimination because they provide strong federal remedies targeted to specific vulnerable groups. By explicitly including sexual orientation and gender identity in these fundamental laws, LGBTQ people will finally be afforded the exact same protections as other covered characteristics under federal law

What can we do?

The Equality Act passed the House of Representatives on May 17, 2019. As of April 15, 2020, the bill has not been taken up in the Senate.

1. We need the U.S. Senate to act!
2. Tell your Senators to pass for the Equality Act!
3. Your voice is needed to change history!
4. It’s been 50 years since Stonewall and 45 years since the first version of the bill was introduced. Tell your Senators: “I need explicit federal nondiscrimination laws that will protect all of me, all the time.”

The Task Force Action Fund has created a template you can fill out to tell your Senate to act on it:

https://www.thetaskforceactionfund.org/current_action/tell-your-senators-pass-the-equality-act/



More on Equality Act

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5/text>

<https://www.hrc.org/equalityact/>

Understanding Sexual and Gender Diversity

- As the visibility of the LGBTQ community continues to grow, it is important to acknowledge that sexual and gender diversity have a global cultural history and sexuality and gender, though related, are two different components of identity and are not interchangeable.

ZERO HOMOPHOBIA

- Rather than being a modern concept or new phenomenon, the roots of sexual and gender diversity can be found in indigenous societies throughout the world, predating our current structure and language of LGBTQ identity. From the Zapotec culture of Southern Mexico recognizing *muxes* as a third/mixed/hybrid gender to the Zo'é peoples of Amazonia who practice non-monogamy traditionally and same-sex relations documented in the pottery of the ancient Peruvian Moche culture, historical examples of sexual and gender fluidity are abundant.
- The idea of diversity is the allowance of a range of possibilities. Both sexuality and gender have more modernly been referenced as existing on a spectrum. Yet, this spectrum can often be restrictive when it has been used to classify people as being gay or straight, male or female, and it is at times the in-between that can cause confusion or be negated altogether. Rather, sexual and gender diversity exists as a universe of options, as an expansiveness that allows for evolution and exploration to discover one's identity and to build on the historical foundation of the community.
- In order to present this universe of options, it is important to provide distinction between sexuality and gender. While sexuality often refers to an individual's physical, sexual, emotional, and/or romantic attraction and preferences towards others, gender relates to one's body and their innate sense of self. The LGBTQ acronym itself combines sexuality and gender which can often be misleading and is not comprehensive for the range of identities that may be applicable for a person. A plus (+) is often used when discussing the LGBTQ(+) community to account for the identities not explicitly named in the acronym.
- Sexuality often but not always references another person's gender. For example, someone who is asexual does not experience sexual attraction to anyone, regardless of their gender while a bisexual may have attractions to someone who is their gender in addition to another gender. In regards to gender, it is necessary to distinguish between sex and gender. Sex is a designation at birth based upon visible anatomy and listed on one's birth certificate typically as male or female. This may exclude Intersex individuals who may have a reproductive or sexual anatomy that exists outside of the strictly binary designations of male or female. If a person identifies with their sex designation from birth, they are cisgender. If one's identity differs from this sex designation, they are transgender. Transgender is an umbrella term that includes a vast array of gender possibilities. Both cisgender and transgender people can also have a range of sexualities. A transgender woman can be a lesbian who is attracted to women who may be cisgender or transgender.
- While there is no definitive list of how many sexualities and genders exist, we must remember that languages and identities are constantly evolving. What we



know to be true about ourselves cannot always be named but can be felt. Providing individuals the language and/or the opportunity to define for themselves who they are is a form of empowerment we all must continue to encourage.

What can we do?

To be an LGBTQ ally requires a willingness to educate others about the discrimination and violence the community faces, to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions, and to uplift and center voices of the community. Educating oneself about the cultural and revolutionary history of sexual and gender diversity is vital to ally ship.

Likewise, for members of the LGBTQ community, we must be allies to each other as part of a shared struggle and shared pride. In the legacy of our diversity lies our beauty and our strength.

<https://www.genderspectrum.org/articles/understanding-gender>

<https://www.e-ir.info/2019/08/20/indigenous-sexualities-resisting-conquest-and-translation/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/different-types-of-sexuality#a-c>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/different-genders#a-d>