

Dealin' in

SCHOOL

Kick me!
I'm A
DYKE!!!

HOMOPHOBIC
AND TRANSPHOBIC

HATE, BULLYING
AND

HARASSMENT ARE
NOT TOLERATED



griffin centre
EVERYBODY COUNTS

Although we are supposed to feel okay to be who we are in our schools, if we are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer or questioning (LGBTT2IQQ), the reality is that a lot of us get hurt.

bullying

And sometimes it's hard to tell if we are being hurt for being LGBTT2IQQ or for being an immigrant, for being told we have intellectual disabilities, for our physical disabilities, our gender, our race or for a combination of these or other things.

It is not our fault that we get bullied and harassed but there are things we can do to help us deal.

Being bullied isn't just a one time thing. It can happen more than once and doesn't just have to be face to face - it can be through facebook, myspace, MSN, e-mail, text messages etc.

What bullying looks like:

- ◆ Gossiping about us or threatening us to our faces or behind our backs
- ◆ Stealing or messing with our stuff
- ◆ Excluding us or making fun of us in front of others (e.g. "That's so gay")
- ◆ Sexual harassment: jokes, insults or unwanted sexual touching

What bullying does:

- ◆ Makes us feel afraid and bad about ourselves
- ◆ Makes us not want to go to school
- ◆ Hurts our bodies
- ◆ Silences us and makes us feel alone

As students who are LGBTT2IQQ, we have a higher chance of being targeted by bullies. You don't have to be queer or trans to experience homophobia or transphobia (a straight person can be bullied for being a lesbian even if they aren't). No matter who it happens to, bullying based on being LGBTT2IQQ is wrong.

So i'm Being bullied, NOW WHAT?

There is no right answer or formula to deal with being bullied. Sometimes we run away, try not to be noticed or tell someone we trust. These are all good responses and it's important to trust our gut instincts. Whatever we choose to do (or not do) is the best for us at the time.

Here are some general ideas to deal with being harassed. Depending on our situation, some ideas will work better than others and some may not work at all. It's up to us to decide.

BASIC SURVIVAL 101

Good Ideas:



Stay calm

Try not to give bullies the reaction they want.



Act confident

It's okay to be scared but acting confident can help keep bullies away.



Walk Away



Stick with a group

Try not to be alone.



Talk to someone we trust

They may be more helpful than we think.



Get to know our internet privacy settings



Read over our text and internet messages before we send them

They aren't confidential anymore once we hit "send".

Maybe not so much:



Fight back

We could get hurt or make the situation worse.



Give out our info on-line

passwords, contact info, I.D. stuff etc.



Meet alone with someone face to face who we met on-line

Bring a friend or meet in a public place.



Respond to text, phone, internet messages when we're angry

We might regret it later.

Sometimes we reach the point where we want to try to change the situation that's causing us to get bullied. Fighting back against being bullied for being queer or trans is a way of survival for us. But sometimes we want to do more.

This is hard to do if our teachers, friends or parents do not know that we are LGBTT2IQQ. Part of the problem is that we are often invisible because everyone is assumed to be straight and to fit into one of the two gender boxes that society gives us.

It's not easy to stop harassment if we can't talk about why we're being harassed. But we don't have to be "out" to make change. Homophobia and transphobia hurts everyone, even people who aren't LGBTT2IQQ.

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

MAKING A REPORT

Making a formal complaint about the bullying we face means that we are asking our school to take responsibility for the homophobia and transphobia that allowed us to be bullied in the first place.

But there are risks to making a complaint:

- ◆ We don't know when change will happen, if at all
- ◆ We might be "outed"
- ◆ It can be painful to tell our stories again
- ◆ We don't know if principals or teachers will take our complaints seriously
- ◆ We could be bullied more if we are seen as a "tattle tale"

Deciding whether to make an official report is especially difficult if we are being harassed by someone in power, like a teacher or guidance counsellor.

Here's what to do if we choose to make a complaint:

Write it down. Keep a record of everything we can remember about the harassment: what happened and where, who was involved, what was said and the date and time.

Go to your principal. Our schools are supposed to be responsible for keeping us safe from discrimination. Ask what they plan on doing about your complaint, and when. Write this info down to keep them accountable.

Follow up. See if the school follows through with their plans and figure out if they are making a difference.

Making Change

Reporting is a brave and important step in creating change for all students. Bullying is part of a bigger picture where our society doesn't value us as queer and trans people who might also be discriminated against in other ways.

Our society needs to change and here are some of the ways we can do this:

-  **Building connections.** Try to link up/volunteer with other people and groups that are fighting discrimination. When different groups get together and start learning about and fighting for each other's issues, the sting of not being valued may not be so intense.
-  Getting our friends together to form a queer and trans group, or **gay/straight alliance** (GSA). This way, we can support each other, raise awareness and take action to eliminate homophobia and transphobia in our schools.
-  Inviting **T.E.A.C.H** (Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia) to run anti-homophobia workshops in our schools (www.teachtoronto.ca).
-  Organizing events in our schools to celebrate **International Day Against Homophobia and Trans Day of Remembrance.**
-  Talking to our **libraries** and asking them to carry more queer and trans materials.

WHAT ELSE IS OUT THERE?

Where can we turn for support when we need it? Check out the list below. It's a good idea to find out what these agencies do in advance, so that if we need support we know who to call.

Griffin Centre - ReachOUT Program

Counselling and weekly drop-in groups to hang out and meet other LGBTT2IQQ youth. 416-222-1153 ♦ www.griffin-centre.org

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868 ♦ www.kidshelpphone.ca

Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line

416-962-9688 (Toronto) or 1-800-268-YOUTH (9688) (Toll Free)
www.youthline.ca

Supporting Our Youth (SOY)

416-324-5077 ♦ www.soytoronto.org

T.E.A.C.H (Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia)

416-961-0113 Ext. 157 ♦ www.teachtoronto.ca

The 519 Church Street Community Centre - Anti-Violence Programme

416-392-6874 ♦ Reporting Line: 416-392-6877
www.the519.org/programs/avp/avp.shtml

Triangle Program, Toronto District School Board

416-393-8443 ♦ schools.tdsb.on.ca/triangle

Equity in Education, Toronto District School Board

www.tdsb.on.ca

Code of Conduct, Toronto Catholic District School Board

www.tcdsb.org/parents/safeschoolsjan2002/pdf/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf

GLSEN: The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network

www.glsen.org

The Safe Schools Coalition

www.safeschoolscoalition.org

**What does “LGBT2IQQ” stand for?
Check out these guides for more information:**

About “GLBTQ” and GLBTQ Youth: from The Safe Schools Coalition
www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-glbtyouth.html

**Info and Support for GLBTQ Youth:
from Advocates for Youth**
www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/info/glbty.htm

**Beyond the Binary: A Tool Kit for Gender Identity
Activism in Schools: from Gay-Straight Alliance Network**
www.gsanetwork.org/BeyondtheBinary/btbonline.pdf

Resources used in creating this Fact Sheet:

**Assessment Toolkit for Bullying, Harassment
and Peer Relations at School**
[http://acsp.cpha.ca/antibullying/english/backinfo/
Assessment_Toolkit.pdf](http://acsp.cpha.ca/antibullying/english/backinfo/Assessment_Toolkit.pdf)

How to make it stop: Anti-Bullying Tactics
www.b-free.ca/about_how.html

**Sexual Harassment and Other Comments
or Actions About a Person’s Sex,
Ontario Human Rights Commission**
www.settlement.org/sys/link_redirect.asp?doc_id=1001469

FINDING OUT MORE:

Griffin Centre

A non-profit charitable mental health agency providing flexible and accessible services to youth, adults and their families.

Our mission is to promote positive change for vulnerable youth and adults with mental health challenges and/or developmental disabilities and their families. We are dedicated to delivering innovative services and developing creative partnerships that enhance lives and communities.

ReachOUT

A creative, inclusive & accessible program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer and questioning (LGBT2IQ) youth in north Toronto.

Includes drop-in groups, community outreach, counselling, art & skills exchange. We offer a safe space for all youth that reflects the diversity of our queer and trans communities.

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This fact sheet is one in a series of four. To find other fact sheets in the series, please download them at www.griffin-centre.org or contact ReachOUT.

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