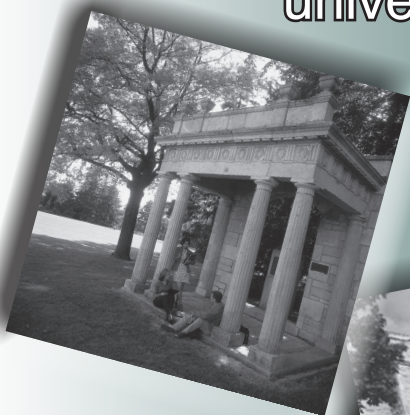


UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

CHANGING LIVES
IMPROVING LIFE

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY OFFICE

RECOGNIZING HETEROSEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA: creating a queer-positive university



other booklets in this series

Understanding Racialization: Creating a Racially Equitable University

Understanding Disability: Creating an Accessible University

Discrimination Awareness: Creating a University Free of Discrimination and Harassment

Cover Photography:

Photo on left by Martin Schlwalbe; photo on right courtesy of the University of Guelph.

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Maintaining and promoting human dignity is a core value of the University of Guelph. The University is therefore committed to a campus free from discrimination. This pamphlet details the University's position on discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

what are homophobia & transphobia?

Homophobia and transphobia are the irrational fear or hatred of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersexed, queer and/or questioning (LGBTTTTIQQ) people or communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as belonging to people in these communities. This involves harassment, prejudicial treatment or negative attitudes towards LGBTTTTIQQ persons and those perceived to be of these sexual orientations or gender identities.

The University's human rights policy, *Human Rights at the University of Guelph*, which derives its authority from the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Homophobia and transphobia can range from discomfort and fear to disgust, hatred and violence, and are manifested in four different ways:

1. Personal or internalized homophobia/transphobia consists of personal beliefs and prejudices.
2. Interpersonal homophobia/transphobia (harassment and individual discrimination) involves individual behaviours based on those personal beliefs.
3. Institutional homophobia/transphobia includes the ways that institutions discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
4. Cultural homophobia (heterosexism) refers to societal values and norms that advantage heterosexuality over all other forms of gender expression and sexual orientation.

homophobic or transphobic behaviours include

- gay-bashing or physical violence, including sexual violence;
- making derogatory comments, innuendos, insults, slurs, jokes or threats about sexual orientation or sexual practice;
- silencing talk of sexual or gender plurality;
- forcing people to “come out” or to stay “in the closet” disclose or hide their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- linking homosexuality with pedophilia (child abuse);
- accusing LGBTTTTIQQ persons of recruiting others to join their sexual orientation;
- defacing notices, posters or property with homophobic or transphobic graffiti;
- rejecting friends or family members because of their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- behaving as though sexual orientation is solely about sexual practice or is a lifestyle choice;
- treating the sexual orientations or gender identities of LGBTTTTIQQ persons as less valid than those of heterosexuals;
- behaving as though all LGBTTTTIQQ people have AIDS or are responsible for its spread;
- refusing to use pronouns or names consistent with a person’s gender identity;
- harassing someone because they do not fit easily into society’s limited definition of what it means to be, and look like, a man or woman.

what is heterosexism?

Heterosexism is the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual. Intentionally or unintentionally, our society advantages heterosexuality and heterosexual persons, while denying, erasing, devaluing, mistreating or discriminating against LGBTTTTIQQ persons or groups, as well as those perceived to be so.

what is heteronormativity?

Heteronormativity is based on the belief that there are two distinct and complementary categories of human beings, male and female, and that the only natural or normal intimate relationships are those between two people of the opposite sex. Additionally, heteronormativity creates roles and norms for each sex, while asserting that a person's sex, gender identity and gender roles should align to either all-male or all-female norms. These norms may be overt, covert or implied. People are not permitted to deviate below the standard that is created by normative heterosexuality. Heteronormativity is reflected in widespread social institutions and social policies that legitimize and advantage heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and natural within society.

recognizing heterosexual & gender identity advantage

Advantages and rewards are bestowed, unearned and unchallenged, on heterosexuals and persons whose gender identity matches their birth assigned sex because of their sexual or gender orientation. The same rewards and advantages are not automatically granted to queer people.

Heterosexuals are advantaged because they have the ability to:

- use gender-based pronouns when describing a relationship without discomfort, fear of reprisal or exclusion from everyday conversations;
- publicly express affection without fear of being ridiculed, harassed or assaulted;
- easily access positive role models and media images for sexual or gender orientation;
- receive validation and support from religious groups, if desired, regarding choice of partner or expression of gender identity;
- easily access reading and educational materials which reflect and endorse family structure, intimate relationships or beliefs on gender identity and genderized social patterns;
- benefit from the assumption that a relationship is normal, healthy and non-deviant;
- live without fear of losing family and friends because of sexual orientation or gender identity;
- not be asked to speak on behalf of all heterosexual people or people whose birth-assigned gender matches their gender identity;
- raise children with the comfort of knowing they will be encouraged and validated in the education system, as well as without fear of being harassed or discriminated against because of their parents' sexual orientation or gender identity;
- know that gender identity or sexual orientation is seen as only one part of the complete individual;
- not fear being denied employment, housing or services because of sexual orientation or gender identity.

what does it mean to be opposed to heterosexism?

Being opposed to heterosexism involves recognizing and questioning the power and advantages society confers on heterosexual people because of their sexual orientation. It involves respecting and fostering the inclusivity and pluralism of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Anti-heterosexism challenges the assumptions that disadvantage LGBTTTTIQQ persons due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

what is intersectionality?

An individual may be a member of one or more protected groups. For example, a gay man may also be a member of a racialized group, have a disability and/or be an elderly person. Each identity may expose a person to a distinct form of discrimination. The combination of various forms of discrimination produces something unique and distinct from any one form standing alone. Each individual's particular experience of discrimination based on the confluence of their identities should be acknowledged and remedied accordingly.

what can i do about homophobia, transphobia & heterosexism?

Whether you are heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, two-spirited, intersexed, queer and/or questioning, we all share the responsibility to end homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism. Here are some tips:

- Identify homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism as the problem, not sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Use gender inclusive and non-heterosexist language. This means, use pronouns that do not assume you know someone's sexual orientation or gender identity and use inclusive language even if you know someone is heterosexual. Help educate and encourage others to use inclusive language.
- Assume that anyone could be LGBTTTTIQQ or heterosexual. Don't assume everyone is heterosexual, should be heterosexual or that everyone identifies with their birth-assigned sex. Similarly, don't assume that someone is LGBTTTTIQQ based on stereotypes or assumptions about their friends.
- Don't tease or harass others for exhibiting behaviours that are not traditionally associated with their gender or what you perceive their gender to be.
- Do not force anyone to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity. And be sensitive to the fact that some people are out in some areas of their lives but not in others.
- Remember, sexual orientation or gender identity are only one part of a person's identity. Just as the lives of heterosexual people include far more than their attraction to members of the opposite sex, LGBTTTTIQQ persons also have friends, skills and interests unrelated to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Don't define anyone by their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Speak up against homophobic or transphobic jokes, comments, or slurs when witnessed. If not, your silence condones and encourages such behaviours.
- Educate yourself. If there are things you don't know or understand about LGBTTTTIQQ issues, do some research, ask questions or contact a group that deals with these issues.

what can i do about homophobia transphobia & heterosexism?

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- Maintain an inclusive group, classroom, living or workspace by talking openly and respectfully about LGBTTTTIQQ issues when they come up. Treat these issues as you would any other issue.
 - Remember that an individual's sexual orientation involves more than sexual behaviour. It includes attraction, companionship, intimacy and emotional attachments, as well as sexual activity.
 - Do not force people to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - Don't assume that LGBTTTTIQQ people are suffering or have regrets about their sexual orientation and want to be heterosexual. Likewise, if someone who is LGBTTTTIQQ is having problems, don't assume sexual orientation is the cause.
 - Engage in inclusive practices. Create work, study and living environments in which gender and sexual pluralism are included, modeled and valued.
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finally, a word about confidentiality

Gender identity and sexual orientation are personal characteristics that may or may not be known to others. Individuals who identify or who are identified as LGBTQIQQ have faced historical disadvantage. Despite protections set out in the University's human rights policy and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, these individuals continue to face the very real possibility of being subjected to discrimination, harassment, verbal abuse and physical violence.

An employer or service provider who legitimately requires and collects data that may directly or indirectly identify a person's sexual orientation or gender identity must ensure the maximum degree of privacy and confidentiality of the information. Confidential information may include:

- driver's license;
- birth certificate;
- identification of next of kin;
- identification of beneficiary for insurance purposes;
- a claim for health benefits or for benefits for a same-sex spouse.

A failure to properly safeguard personal information about an individual's gender identity or sexual orientation may infringe the University's human rights policy where this subjects an individual to discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.

glossary

BISEXUAL refers to a person who is romantically/sexually attracted to or involved with both men and women.

CROSS-DRESSER is an individual who dresses in clothes of the opposite sex for emotional and psychological well being.

GAY refers to a man who is romantically/sexually attracted to or involved with other men and is also used as an umbrella term for everyone who has same-sex romantic/sexual attractions or relations.

GENDER IDENTITY is a person's self-concept of their own gender, regardless of biological sex, that may be the same as or different from the gender traditionally associated with their birth sex. The lack of conformity can range from partial to whole. Thus, identifying with the female gender means being socially and culturally female, even if one is biologically male or intersexed. A person may also define their gender identity as being more fluid to encompass parts of masculinity, femininity and other non-traditional gender expressions. Some people do not identify with any gender labels at all. A person's gender identity is not related to their sexual orientation.

HETEROSEXUAL is a person who is romantically/sexually attracted to or involved with members of the opposite sex.

INTERSEXED refers to a person who is born with both male and female sex characteristics.

LESBIAN is a woman who is romantically/sexually attracted to or involved with other women.

glossary

LGBTTTIQQ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transexual, two-spirited, intersexed, queer and questioning.

QUEER, once a derogatory term, has been reclaimed by some LGBTTTIQQ persons and is often used as an umbrella term to encompass all of LGBTTTIQQ, to refer to political activism or academic inquiry on LGBTTTIQQ issues or as a self-identifying label for persons who experience their sexuality as more fluid than the individual LGBTTTIQQ labels imply.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION is more than a status or label; it is an absolute and undeniable personal characteristic at the core of a person's identity. It is a person's romantic, affectional and sexual interests in members of the same gender, opposite gender or both/all genders. Some people experience their sexual orientation as an unchanging, lifelong part of their nature, and others experience it in a more fluid way that changes over time. Everyone has a sexual orientation whether or not they are sexually active.

TRANSSEXUAL refers to an individual who has a strong and persistent feeling that they are living as the wrong sex. The term is frequently used to describe individuals who have undergone sex-reassignment surgery.

TRANSGENDERIST is an individual whose gender identity is closest to, and lives as, the gender opposite to their birth assigned gender, but has decided not to have sex-reassignment surgery.

TRANSGENDERED refers to individuals who reject, in whole or in part, their birth-assigned gender identity. The term encompasses individuals who identify as transsexual, transgenderist, intersexed or as a cross-dresser.

glossary

TWO-SPIRITED refers to a spiritual identity of some First Nations persons who embody masculine and feminine spirits or genders within the same body. Traditionally, two-spirited peoples were considered to be visionaries and healers who fulfilled roles assigned to both sexes and/or other roles reserved only for two-spirited individuals. This term, drawn from the traditional belief that sexuality and gender are inseparable from other aspects of life, can refer to a person of aboriginal ancestry who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer, or who identifies as being either of mixed gender or transgender.

what to do if you've been harassed or discriminated against

If you have experienced harassment or discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, contact the Human Rights and Equity Office at ext. 53000 and ask to speak with a staff member. The staff member will provide you with information and help to identify your options if you have been involved in an incident that appears to be harassing or discriminatory.

resources

GUELPH AREA RESOURCES

Human Rights and Equity Office	Ext. 53000
Campus Police	Ext. 52000
Counseling Services	Ext. 53244
Occupational Health Services	Ext. 52133
Aboriginal Resource Centre	Ext. 58074
Centre for Students with Disabilities	Ext. 56208
Campus Safe Walk	Ext. 53200
Student Health Services	Ext. 52131
Central Students' Association Human Rights Office	Ext. 52629
OUTline	Ext. 56358

ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

City Police	519-824-1212
Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis 24-hour line	519-836-5710
	1-800-265-7233 (Wellington)

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