

International Day Against Homophobia

A day-by-day campaign

On May 17 each year the *International Day Against Homophobia* is a time to combine the efforts of all those involved both in fighting prejudice and in contributing to LGBT people's well-being.

A day-by-day campaign

The slogan – *A day-by-day campaign* – shows that the fight against homophobia cannot be restricted to just one day out of the year. The purpose of this fight is to combat prejudice and attitudes that bring about anti-LGBT behaviour. This fight needs constant monitoring. May 17 marks the highpoint of the annual campaign.

Community and taking charge

The fight against homophobia is a challenge for our society just like how fighting all other forms of discrimination is. All who believe in an equal society should join in this fight. Everybody is encouraged to highlight May 17 in their community and organise awareness-raising activities.

Fondation Émergence's Part

Fondation Émergence is doing its share by proposing thematic campaigns, putting out educational material, keeping stock of activities, encouraging community groups, public authorities, participants in civil society, and individuals to take part in the fight against homophobia.

The Rainbow Flag has been around for 30 years now!

The Rainbow Flag is the world's most recognised symbol of LGBT diversity. Created by San Francisco based artist Gilbert Baker, the Rainbow Flag was first used in 1978 at Gay Pride in San Francisco. The six colours represent various facets of LGBT communities: red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, blue for art, and violet for spirituality.



How to get involved

The fight against homophobia requires each and everyone in their communities to get involved. Here are a few examples of efforts that can be made.

Posters and Pamphlets

Hang a poster in waiting rooms and provide pamphlets in a display stand.

Internet Banner

Post an *International Day Against Homophobia* banner on websites.

Email Distribution Lists

Send out emails for the annual campaigns against homophobia.

Resolution of Support

Ask your municipal or regional board to pass a resolution supporting the *International Day Against Homophobia* on May 17.

Activities

Organise activities, seminars or conferences on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and transsexual (LGBT) issues in your field or community.

Speaking Out on Anti-LGBT Behaviour

Report anti-LGBT language and incidents, lodge a complaint with the appropriate organisations, and keep Fondation Émergence informed.

The Media

The fight against homophobia needs to reach all communities. The media can contribute if you suggest reports and viewers' letters, and if you invite the media to organised events.

Raising the Rainbow Flag
Get involved in the nationwide plan to raise the Rainbow Flag on May 17 for the International Day Against Homophobia. Wherever there's a flagpole, you can fly a Rainbow Flag.

Tools and Resources

A wide range of resources and studies prepared for healthcare workers and professionals is available at www.homophobiaday.com. Here are a few examples from the list:

Role-models for a healthy attitude

Capital Health District Authority
Nova Scotia based Capital Health District Authority District works to promote LGBTI health.
www.cdha.nshealth.ca

Gender Reassignment Surgery

A sex-reassignment surgery programme for male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals and for female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals. Associated with the Clinique de chirurgie esthétique St-Joseph in Montréal.
www.grsmontreal.com

British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health

Vancouver based BCCEWH supports a policy to improve the health of women, along others, who are marginalised due to their sexual orientation.
www.bccewh.bc.ca

McGill University Sexual Identity Centre – MUSIC

MUSIC is Canada's first mental health clinic for LGB people.
514-934-1934, ext. 43585

Gender and Health Collaborative Curriculum Project (Sexual Diversity)

For medical schools in Ontario, this programme focuses on issues related to gender and health. It includes various learning modules, for example, on gender and sexual diversity.
www.genderandhealth.ca

OPHA – Ontario Public Health Association

The Ontario Public Health Association gathers public and community healthcare professional associations to work on projects such as on access to healthcare for LGBTIQ communities.
www.opha.on.ca/workgroups

Sherbourne Health Centre

With a solid reputation in Canada, this Ontario-based centre provides support services focused on inclusion and accessibility, such as programmes and services for LGBT health.
www.sherbourne.on.ca

Transgender Health Program

Vancouver Coastal Health has set up a transgender health programme.
www.vch.ca/transhealth

Resources mean something

PFLAG Canada

PFLAG Canada keeps an up-to-date list of doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors for LGBTIQ people.
1-888-822-9494
gender@pflagcanada.ca
www.pflagcanada.ca

GAY LINE

Free and confidential help and information telephone and online service for the LGBTIQ Community in the province of Québec.
514-866-5090
info@gayline.qc.ca
www.gayline.qc.ca

Information, training, and research

A Positive Space Is A Healthy Place

Public Health Alliance for LGBTIQ Equity was started to carry out recommendations and build partnerships and projects focused on LGBTIQ issues.
www.opha.on.ca/resources

Asking The Right Questions 2: Talking With Clients About Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity In Mental Health, Counselling And Addiction Settings

Drug addiction and mental health problems can be linked to issues concerning sexual orientation or sexual identity and especially to any associated social oppression.
www.camh.net/Publications

Getting transcompetent care: How to work with your nurse or doctor

This document offers key answers to people who have questions on ways to help doctors and nurses provide quality health care to transgendered people.
www.vch.ca/transhealth

Projet/Project Interaction

A committee working on LGBT health and well-being.
www.mcgill.ca/interaction

The Canadian Women's Health Network

The CWHN actively fights discrimination based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability, language, and region.
www.cwhn.ca



Additional resources

AIDS COMMITTEE OF OTTAWA www.aco-cso.ca
AIDS COMMUNITY CARE MONTRÉAL – ACCS www.accmontreal.org
CONCORDIA SEXUAL DIVERSITY sda.concordia.ca
EGALE CANADA www.egale.ca
HEAD & HANDS www.headandhands.ca
LESBIAN MOTHERS ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC www.aml-lma.org
OUTLINE www.uoguelph.ca/~outline
PROJECT 10 www.p10.qc.ca
QUEER MCGILL www.queermcgill.ca
SAFE SPACES www.safespaces.ca
THE 519 CHURCH STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE www.the519.org
THE CENTRE www.lgthcentrevancouver.com
YOUTHLINE www.youthline.ca

Complete List at www.homophobiaday.org

Suicide – Breaking the silence

Being gay or lesbian is not a sickness, nor is it a reason to take one's life. Any surrounding homophobia, however, can weaken and destabilize people trying to deal with a sexual identity crisis, thereby increasing their psychological distress and pushing them to want to end it all.

Although there is no connection between suicide and being gay or lesbian, gay men and lesbians can find themselves at a high risk of suicide at a specific moment in their lives – when they discover and realise that they are different. This period is characterised by an identity crisis related to sexual orientation and manifests itself through questioning, discomfort, stress, and anxiety all leading to isolation. The moment, length, and age when this crisis occurs varies from person to person.

This situation forces people into silence, preventing them from getting support from family, friends, and peers. Healthcare workers and professionals should pay very special attention to this issue. A positive attitude and non-biased language will encourage people to come out to a professional in addition to improving the relationship.

STOP

Homosexuality is NOT a sickness!



Homophobia can make you feel sick!

Fondation Émergence

May 17

International Day Against Homophobia

A day-by-day campaign

What is homophobia? – It's about attitudes.

Homophobia is an attitude, feeling, or aversion towards gay men and lesbians or towards homosexuality in general. It also includes rejecting people perceived as being gay or lesbian and anything associated with LGBT people, such as gender non-conformity. The following are different types of homophobia:

Biphobia

An aversion towards bisexuality or bisexual people.

Gayphobia

An aversion towards male homosexuality or gay men.

Lesbophobia

An aversion towards female homosexuality or lesbians.

Transphobia

An aversion towards transgendered, transsexual or transitioning people.

Internalised Homophobia

A negative attitude that leads some LGBT people to think less of themselves due to their sexual orientation.



Healthcare and Homosexuality

Campaign Theme

Homosexuality is not a sickness!

Homosexuality is not a sickness. However, specialists haven't always thought so. For a long time, mental health professionals considered sexual activity between same-sex partners an illness. Accustomed only to handling people with mental health issues, psychiatrists ended up believing that all gay men and lesbians were ill. They listed homosexuality among mental illnesses in the DSM (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder*) used by the American Psychiatric Association, an internationally recognized organisation. It wasn't until December 15, 1973, that homosexuality was removed from the Association's reference manual. This decision is reflected in the DSM-III published in 1980.

During an annual Board of Trustees meeting held on January 1975, the American Psychological Association did likewise by passing a resolution to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses and emotional disorders for good. In 1996, the Canadian Psychological Association followed suit by adopting several resolutions based on the same principle.

On **May 17**, 1991, the World Health Organisation (WHO) removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. In 1992, this withdrawal was officially recorded in its international classification (ICD-10). At its 2006 National Conference, the American Psychological Association restated its position in which homosexuality was not an illness.

Prejudice

Unfortunately, prejudice is deep-rooted. Some people continue to think that homosexuality is a mental disorder while others mistakenly believe that it can be cured. Specialists know that this is impossible. Bisexual and transgendered people experience the same prejudice as well.

Campaign Goal

Healthcare

Annual campaigns to combat homophobia focus on a different scope of activity each year. The goal of the *Homosexuality is not a sickness!* campaign is to reach all healthcare workers and professionals.

Healthcare includes a vast number of workers and professionals in the physical, mental, and public health fields: chiropractors, dental hygienists, dentists, denturists, dieticians, emergency medical technicians, guidance counsellors, health technicians, hearing-aid specialists, midwives, nurses, occupational therapists, opticians, optometrists, pharmacists, physicians and specialists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, psychologists, school psychologists, social workers, surgeons, and so on.

Healthcare workers and professionals work in many environments that affect the entire population: hospitals, care centres, pharmacies, pharmaceutical companies, child welfare organisations, detention centres, learning institutions, medical clinics, assisted reproduction clinics, and daycare centres. They work in a wide range of service fields such as home care, social services, rehabilitation, domestic violence, suicide prevention, and alcohol and drug addiction.

Conversion Therapies

NO!

One of the methods created to attack or eliminate homosexuality has been conversion therapies, or so-called "reparative therapies", which ex-gay and other anti-LGBT movements are still based on today. However, starting in the early 90's, they have been discredited by virtually all major medical, psychiatric, and psychological organisations because there is no scientific basis for such therapies and they can cause more harm than good.

Source: Fortier, C. and Julien, D. *Les psychothérapies de conversion pour les personnes gaies, lesbiennes et bisexuelles : enjeux éthiques et déontologiques*. [transl.: Conversion Psychotherapies for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual People: Moral and Ethics Issues.] Canadian Psychology / Psychologie canadienne, Vol. 44: 4, November 2003, pp 332-350.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Homosexuality is not a disease. It is not how infections and diseases are spread during sexual activity between same-sex partners.

A person can transmit an infection or disease to another person during sex. It's possible between a woman and a man, between two women or between two men since it has nothing to do with their sexual orientation.

Unprotected sex and a high-number of sex partners increase the risk of becoming infected. Many men who have sex with other men have become aware of this and take steps to minimise the risk.

www.catie.ca
Further information on sexual health and STIs.

Blood and Organ Donations

Public health authority Health Canada has decided to bar men who have sex with other men from donating blood and organs. This policy ban on groups of people is based on statistical probabilities and does not take into account actual sexual behaviour.



Prejudice

Prejudice against gay men and lesbians is nothing new, nor is it easy to fight. It's sad to say that even though homosexuality is not a disease, issues concerning the spread of STIs and policy bans on donating blood and organs reinforce prejudice by associating disease with sexual activity between same-sex partners.

Healthcare Workers and Professionals Healthy Attitudes

Like the general population, 10% of healthcare professionals' clients are gay and lesbian. Many gay men and lesbians choose not to reveal their sexual orientation and are often uncomfortable when dealing with the issue.

Many healthcare workers and professionals aren't interested in what sexual orientation a person has. However, they need to remain open-minded toward different sexual orientations and keep a prejudice-free attitude.

Non-biased Language

Feeling ill-at-ease with homosexuality can compromise the quality of both the relationship and the service that workers and professionals provide. With this in mind, health professionals should refrain from assuming what a client's sexual orientation is. Sometimes it takes a simple word or just a positive attitude to establish a trusting relationship.

Examples

Situation	Creates awkwardness	Establishes trust
A man who's depressed sees a doctor	"How's your girlfriend doing?"	"How's your partner doing?"
A nurse arrives at a female patient's home	"Do you live alone or with your husband?"	"Do you live alone?"
A school social worker responds to a young man with a question	"Do you and your girlfriend have a sexual relationship?"	"Do you have a sexual relationship?"
A pharmacist greets a man who's come to pick up medication for someone else	"Make sure to tell your wife to take this medication..."	"Now remember, it's important to take..."

Coming Out to a Healthcare Professional

Lesbians and gay men shouldn't have to feel uncomfortable about discussing their sexual orientation with a healthcare worker. It's often helpful to keep in mind that healthcare professionals are bound by professional secrecy, which will likely make things smoother for consulting clients.

Fondation Émergence

We fight prejudice

Fondation Émergence was created in 2000. After having led awareness campaigns for parents, teachers, and heterosexual boys, Fondation started the National Day Against Homophobia, which over the years has grown to become the *International Day Against Homophobia*. Fondation Émergence has the mission to foster gay men and lesbians' development, encourage society's inclusion of gays and lesbians, raise the level of awareness of gay and lesbian issues, fight prejudice against gay men, lesbians, and other people of sexual diversity, and support Gai Écoute's mission.

Fondation Émergence

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We fight against prejudice

International Day Against Homophobia
mail@homophobiaday.org
www.homophobiaday.org

International Day Against HOMOPHOBIA

MAY 17, A DAY-BY-DAY CAMPAIGN

Fondation Émergence needs your help to continue in its mission.

- Donation by check made out to Fondation Émergence inc.
- Donation by credit card (Visa or MasterCard) at 514-866-6788.

Fondation Émergence is a registered charitable organisation and can issue official receipts for income tax purposes. Registration Number: 875907420RR0001.

The International Day Against Homophobia has been made possible thanks to:



Contributions can also be made to LGBT organisations in your area