

20 IDEAS
FOR CREATING SCHOOLS
THAT ARE **OPEN**
TO DIVERSITY



CFH

20 IDEAS FOR CREATING SCHOOLS THAT ARE **OPEN** TO DIVERSITY



There are a number of pressing reasons why **homophobia** and gender based **harassment** need to be addressed in schools.

STUDENTS' SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Bullying and verbal harassment are prevalent in schools starting in early elementary school. Before sexual orientation even becomes an issue, children begin to use homophobic insults to target those who do not conform to dominant notions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity.¹ Boys who are sensitive, artistic, or not athletic, and girls who excel at sports, do not dress in a stereotypically feminine manner, or who aren't considered attractive, can easily become targets. Youth are intolerant to gender non-conformity and their learned homophobia can have damaging effects on those who are targeted. The fear of being identified as gay or lesbian, and then being stigmatized because of it, is a major reason behind depression, anxiety, and even suicide.²

STUDENTS' SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH (CONTINUED)

A Québec researcher noted that numerous studies have concluded that young gay males are 6-16 times more at risk than heterosexual youth for attempting suicide.³ Young lesbian girls as well have more suicidal thoughts and are five times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts.⁴ Yet studies have shown that a supportive social environment was associated with significantly fewer suicide attempts.⁵

Whether students are heterosexual or homosexual, homophobic bullying can affect their self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. Youth can attempt to escape a hostile environment through unhealthy behaviours such as skipping school, drug and alcohol abuse and high-risk sexual behaviours. Homophobia can also have long-term effects on physical and emotional well-being. Adults who experienced homophobia during their youth often still feel the effects, even when the bullying goes away.⁶ The module **“Homophobia in Québec Schools”** gives an overview of the extent and impact of this phenomenon in Québec's schools.

CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE

Schools are expected to prepare students to become active and engaged citizens in a democratic society. In order to meet the needs of all students, schools have slowly begun to adapt to include the voices, perspectives and experiences of all members of our multicultural society. An example of this is the introduction of the Ethics and Religious Culture program. This course has been mandatory for all public and private elementary and high schools in Québec since 2008. It is a program where students can come into contact with the world's religions and spiritualities.

It is of prime importance to address issues of diversity and equity in order to ensure that all children have the opportunity to see their lives reflected in the curriculum. To continue to improve our efforts at making schools more inclusive of diverse students and their families, we need to begin to specifically address issues of gender identity and expression and sexual diversity. If we hope to live in a society that values all people, and where every child has an opportunity to succeed, then we need to find ways to teach that include diverse experiences related to gender and sexual diversity, as well.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In the Québec study,⁷ homophobic acts that were experienced, anticipated or witnessed lead to a variety of negative consequences. As mentioned above, a great number of homophobia's victims experience psychological and emotional problems (sadness, withdrawal, depression), anxiety issues and low self-esteem. Some have suicidal thoughts or have even attempted suicide. These problems are directly or indirectly related to the homophobia that they experience at school. Because of this, many have difficulty maintaining friendships at school, and this adds to the isolation that they experience. To be able to tolerate these problems some students reported using drugs or alcohol.

Homophobia also had an impact on academic success. Because they anticipated homophobic episodes or were forced to encounter their aggressors on a daily basis, many victims reported feeling uneasy at school and having trouble concentrating in class. Some skipped classes (often Phys. Ed.) or even whole school days, because they felt unsafe in their school setting. To varying degrees, the academic success of these young victims of homophobia was compromised because of their lack of interest in school or their difficulty concentrating. In some cases, experiencing homophobia lead to a significant decrease in academic success, while others reported having changed, or wanting to change, schools to free themselves from the bad reputation that followed them. In some cases youth have even quit school or expressed a desire to do so, to escape from homophobic harassment.

This research confirms what has been found in earlier American studies, that students who are the victims of homophobic and gender-based harassment at school are more likely to miss school and less likely to pursue higher education.⁸ Therefore if we reduce these barriers, it is logical to conclude that fewer students would miss school and more would continue on to higher education.

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO?

There are several things that teachers, administrators and other professionals who work with youth can do in the classroom, school or community centre to promote understanding and acceptance and to create a safe and supportive environment for LGBTQ students and students with LGBT family members, as well as those who do not conform to stereotypical gender roles.

CHALLENGE **HOMOPHOBIC** LANGUAGE

- 1 Challenge students' use of homophobic language in the same way that one would challenge racial slurs, and identify its use specifically as homophobia.
- 2 Structure a classroom discussion on homophobic language and educate students about words that are used in a derogatory manner such as 'fag', 'queer' and 'dyke'.
- 3 Don't let the phrases like "That's so gay," etc., go by without immediately acknowledging how they affect students.

When students use phrases such as "You're such a lezzie!" or "Those shoes are so gay!" it is often dismissed as "harmless teasing" and not thought to be hurtful, especially where the intent is not to comment on someone's actual or perceived sexual orientation. However, regardless of what was intended, these terms liken being gay to something that's bad, wrong or inferior.

CHALLENGE HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE (CONTINUED)

Schools have a duty to safeguard the wellbeing of all young people in their care. Failure to respond to homophobic language can have an impact on pupils' confidence and self-esteem, as well as on their academic success. In the same way that school staff can challenge racist language, they should feel confident to respond to homophobic language whenever it happens. LGBTQ students and those who do not conform to gender roles are more likely to feel that their school is accepting and tolerant if school staff respond to homophobic incidents, including homophobic language.

See the module **'Reacting to Children's Homophobic Words and Actions'** and the classroom activity **'Understanding What Lies Behind the Words'** with its information sheet **'Definitions and Origins of homophobic insults'**.

MODEL INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

4

Show support for LGBTQ youth as well as others who are victims of homophobia, through modelling inclusive language and behaviour.

Teachers can show support for LGBTQ youth as well as others who are victims of homophobia through modelling inclusive language. Use gender and orientation neutral language and examples in your class lessons. For example, use 'partner' rather than 'boyfriend/girlfriend'; use the pronoun a transsexual person identifies with (e.g. 'he' if the person identifies as a man); use 'parent' or 'guardian' rather than 'mother and father'. Avoid gender specific language and assumptions in class activities (such as asking girls to help clean up or boys to help move heavy things. Avoid saying things like "Boys don't cry," "Act like a man," or "Don't act like a girl."

« *I try to use language that is as neutral as possible, especially when I am talking to a student for the first time. For example when speaking with a boy I will ask, "Do you have someone in your life?" instead of assuming that he's attracted to girls or that he has a girlfriend. I think my attitude allows LGBT students to approach me more easily, because they know I am open to their emotional reality and their love lives. By doing so I'm opening a door so that they can confide in me and share their concerns. From my point of view, it's a small gesture that is simple and free, and it makes all the difference.* »

FRENCH TEACHER QUÉBEC CITY

CREATE **SAFE** SPACE

5

Create a safe space for students by working with them to set norms and expectations to ensure respect.

Lead a discussion where students create ground rules for themselves about behaviour and language that are fair inclusive and involve respect for all. Set norms and expectations to ensure respect. Starting the school year by working together with your students to establish classroom norms can help to set the tone for the whole year through. Every student wants to feel safe, respected and valued in your classroom. Inviting them to describe and name these expectations in their own words helps them to take ownership of their classroom culture and community right from the start.

« *At the beginning of the school year I always start off by establishing a ‘code of conduct’ with my students. We dedicate several hours to this, because I use the occasion to speak about notions of respect and discrimination. It might seem a bit long and dry, but I see the positive effects that this produces in the long run. I have a lot less discipline to do the rest of the year. From the outset, the kids know that I don’t accept hurtful words, insults or jokes that are sexist, racist or homophobic. In my class, it’s zero tolerance! In the beginning they say I’m too strict, but after a few weeks many of them come and thank me. One of my students even confided that she feels good in my class because, she says, at least there’s one class where she can concentrate without worrying someone will call her “fat”. Teenagers can be really mean with each other, so I consider that it’s my role to put an end to the violence and make sure that my class is a safe space.*

ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS CULTURE TEACHER CHAUDIÈRE-APPALACHES

« *In my classroom when one student bullies or harasses another, my rule is that the bully must carry out five acts of kindness toward the victim. These acts can take the form of having lunch with the person, inviting them in a game, picking them for a team sport, helping them carry their books, helping them with school work, making them a card, writing an apology letter, giving them their space in line, introducing them to their friends. All of these are examples, and depending on the grade level, other acts of kindness can be utilized. This strategy works best when the acts come spontaneously from the bully and are immediately recognized by the teacher or adult involved in conflict resolution, and positively reinforced. Although at first it may feel forced, by the end of the day these gestures really bring these two students together. And the effects are lasting!*

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER MONTREAL

ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

6

Work with students to create a system of accountability to remind each other when those norms are broken and how to make amends.

Doing nothing about bullying is unacceptable. If it doesn't already exist, create an anti-bullying code of conduct that clarifies behavioural expectations of your participating students and the consequences for failing to meet those expectations. Involve as many stakeholders in developing this code of conduct as you can. The buy-in of everyone involved ensures that the response to bullying incidents is consistent and fair. These rules create a system of accountability for students who bully as well as those who do not act appropriately when they witness bullying.

A code of conduct against homophobic acts means very little if it is not applied. To ensure that the code of conduct is respected, clear guidelines for consequences and appropriate educational intervention for students who commit an infraction need to be established. These guidelines must also include an efficient and confidential means for the victims and witnesses of homophobia to rapidly report all incidents.

See the module **'How to Establish Inclusive and non-discriminatory Policies'**.

« *In our school we've initiated a mechanism by which students can report situations of harassment and bullying without being identified or being seen as a 'snitch'. Every Wednesday, students have to write a small anonymous text on a proposed subject. There's also a space on the sheet for them to write about difficulties they are personally experiencing, or problems they've witnessed. They put their papers in a box that the teachers give me at the break. The activity is a pretext to offer students the opportunity to be heard, without worrying about being judged, harassed or rejected. Because it's not the teacher who is reading their texts, students feel more at ease about writing things, without having to censor themselves. Of course some of the messages I receive aren't pertinent, but some are really cries for help from students who otherwise wouldn't come to my office to speak to me.*

SPECIAL-NEEDS EDUCATOR LAC-SAINT-JEAN

ENHANCE CURRICULUM

7

Set aside classroom time every week, as little as 20 minutes, to have students participate in a group discussion or activity where trust, empathy and acceptance are fostered.

Activities, lesson plans, books and films can be used to foster discussion and promote inclusion and fairness. Include age-appropriate discussion that educates students on what words such as ‘gay’ mean. Chasnoff’s film, *It’s Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (1996) provides examples of teachers doing so with students as early as kindergarten. Teaching about family diversity, inclusive of families with same-sex parents, is an effective way to introduce the subject of diversity.

For older youth, including gay and lesbian leaders, writers and historical figures as examples in your teaching creates greater awareness and acceptance and establishes an environment of inclusiveness.

For a full list of classroom activities, books and films, see the sections ‘**Classroom activities: preschool-elementary**’ and ‘**Classroom activities: high school**’.

I invite my students to write their questions on little pieces of paper that they put into my ‘discussion hat’. The themes we speak about change regularly, allowing us to cover a wide variety of topics that young people are thinking about. At any given moment, I’ll pick a question out of the hat and animate a discussion with the class. Exchange, discussion, debate...students love that! It stimulates them. Sometimes it even becomes a reward with some classes; they ask for it again and again. I love to see their surprise when I speak about homosexuality and tell them that this actor is gay or that public personality is bisexual. It’s my way of fighting prejudice: one question at a time.

ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS CULTURE TEACHER MAURICIE

EXPRESS CARING

8

Be a caring and supportive adult for young people.

One of the most important factors for students' success, now and later, is the number of caring adults in their life. Adults can play an important role in supporting and encouraging students who do not conform to restrictive gender stereotypes and roles, and because of this, so often, become the victims of homophobic bullying. Students should know which staff members they can turn to. Hanging rainbow flags, inclusive posters or placing 'safe zone' stickers on doors are good ways to help identify where supportive staff members are located. A group of open and accepting adults, empowered to deal with homophobia, can be an incredible resource for youth who are experiencing bullying.

« *In my office, I've put up the Gai-ecoute poster: "Fifi, c'est le nom d'un chien". I love it! Even if that poster came out a long time ago, it's an excellent way, with a bit of humour, to sensitize youth, and even my colleagues, to the impacts of homophobia. When they come to see me, some of the students make comments about the poster. Some will laugh and others will be a bit uncomfortable. Whatever the reaction, it's a great tool to initiate a discussion. And also it allows me, in a clear and easy way, to say that I'm open to sexual diversity.*

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER OUTAOUAIS

For more information: www.gai-ecoute.qc.ca/default.aspx?scheme=71 (French only)

BUILD A COALITION

9

Identify and build relationships with key allies in your school and community.

If you are a teacher, particularly if you are early in your career, it is very important to identify other teachers, and administrators who are supportive of your efforts. By creating a strong network of individuals and organizations who share your visions and goals you can not only gain from their knowledge but you are also laying the foundation for long term and sustainable changes. Building a coalition is an important step that can provide personal and professional support throughout the change process.

I am a member of an 'Allies Network' that was put together by an organization in my region. This affiliation has allowed me to know what resources are available in my community, and to participate in workshops and conventions about homosexuality, bisexuality and gender expression. It also means that I've personally committed to fighting homophobia in my milieu. The network brings together dozens of professionals in education, health and social services and in community organizations. This really helps to coordinate actions. I can refer youth to other organizations, whether institutional or community-based, and I know that each young person will be well followed. No one falls through the cracks. So it's very motivating and enriching to participate because I have the feeling that we are making a real change in our region.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE

For more information: www.grischap.qc.ca/indexFr.asp?numero=130 (French only)

ENCOURAGE AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

10

Set a positive example and encourage a violence-free environment.

The power that administrators/school principals have to shape and influence their school environments has been widely documented.⁹ They have an important role to play in supporting teachers and school initiatives that work against homophobia. They can also encourage and enable staff training against homophobia. The openness/leadership of school administrators to work against homophobia has been shown to be one of the most significant factors that can affect a school's progress toward inclusion.

DEVELOP POLICY

11

Develop policies that make specific mention of homophobia and gender-based harassment.

In discussions about best practices to create inclusive environments, many educators expressed concern that they would lack support or even risk losing their jobs, if they spoke about subjects related to homophobia and sexual orientation. Yet, every student has the right, both legally and ethically, to an equal opportunity to learn and flourish in a safe environment. As a result, many of our laws, charters and court cases, as well as important civil society groups, like unions and professional orders, support proactive anti-homophobia work. Schools have both the mandate and society's backing to support social change.

One formal tool that school leaders have to reshape school cultures is revising and actively implementing school policies. School policies that address discrimination in a generalized manner, however, often result in a collective unawareness about discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. Schools' anti-discrimination policies must therefore explicitly include protection against harassment and discrimination based on gender expression and sexual orientation. By doing so, a school climate can be created where teachers feel at ease and supported when they use inclusive curriculum. School policy can be developed and revised in collaboration with school staff. Students, who constitute the majority of the school population, can also be consulted when drafting and implementing policy.

See the module **'How to Establish Inclusive and non-discriminatory Policies'**.

See the module on **'Legal, Moral and Ethical Support for Ending Homophobia'**.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SERVICES AND TRAINING OFFERED BY COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

12 Connect with resources from community-based organizations in your region for information, training, support and materials.

13 Take advantage of services offered by community-based organizations to help LGBTQ youth..

Advocate with your principal or administrator for professional development training on school LGBTQ issues including training to recognize and effectively address LGBTQ bullying. Staff and teachers should be trained to appropriately address homophobia. School boards should work with community organizations to build and implement such training.

Pre-service teachers should also be trained in the prevention and management of homophobia and gender-based violence through courses on equity and social justice offered in Education programs. Community-based organizations often also offer services for youth. For instance, many schools include the telephone help-line numbers of Gay Line and Gai-écoute in their student handbooks.

For a full list of organizations to invite to your workplace (for students and/or school staff) see the module on ‘**Organizations to invite**’ in the ‘**Safe and inclusive environments**’ section. For a list of community resources for youth see the module ‘**Community organizations**’ in the section ‘**LGBTQ youth and their parents**’.

« *Over the past few years, I’ve collaborated with GRIS, a community organization in my region, to sensitize my students to the realities of homosexuality and bisexuality. Their volunteers come to my class and respond to my students’ questions. Their testimonies help students to deconstruct certain myths and prejudices, and also they offer positive role models of gay, lesbian and bisexual people. Students like hearing their anecdotes, because the examples they give are from real-life experiences. Even though each group is different, certain questions come back each year: “How did you find out you were gay?” “How did your family and friends react?”*

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER QUÉBEC

For more information: www.gris.ca/lesgrisduquebec

« *I took the ‘Family Diversity’ training, offered by the LGBT Family Coalition, as part of my bachelor’s degree at university. I liked how the presenters challenged my thoughts about homophobia and provided me with ways to approach homophobic people, beliefs and words. The combination of role-playing, video-clips and talking about myths and stereotypes really opened up the issue for me and made me aware of its importance. The resources and tools given at the end of the session will be so useful when I begin teaching.*

STUDENT, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE

For more information: www.familleshomoparentales.org

SHARE

14

Share information and resources.

Encourage other staff members to model LGBTQ support in classrooms and throughout the school to ensure student safety, emotional well-being and academic success. Pass these resources along to a colleague!

PROVIDE COUNSELLING

15

Offer psychological support to students.

Identify at least one trained staff member to serve as a resource for LGBT students, those who are questioning their sexual orientation, those with non-conforming gender expressions, those with LGBT family members, and those in general who are affected by homophobic bullying. In many cases this would be the school psychologist or counsellor, but a teacher or other staff member may be a more effective resource. Students should have a choice if possible. Having a non-mental health professional act as a resource for students can help normalize sexual minority/gender expression issues and prevent them from being viewed as a 'mental health issue'. The staff member should be trained to be knowledgeable about effective strategies for working with LGBTQ students, familiar with the best practices for implementing anti-bias programs in schools and knowledgeable about the resources available in the community.

« *Because my training is multi-disciplinary, I can offer support to my students at a number of different levels, in collaboration with other professionals at my school. The problem of homophobia amongst students remains a constant preoccupation in our milieu. So I participated in a training session offered by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec in order to be better equipped to implement initiatives to end homophobic violence. My newly acquired knowledge has made me a resource person at my school. I'm not a specialist or an expert on the subject, but I'm much better equipped to intervene.*

SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY ANIMATOR EASTERN TOWNSHIPS

For more information: www.csn.qc.ca (Use search engine and type "nouvelle vision homosexualité")

ORGANIZE INCLUSIVE SCHOOL EVENTS

16

Ensure that school events and celebrations are inclusive of LGBTQ students and families.

Celebrating LGBT events can help LGBTQ students and those with LGBT family members feel included in the school. Promote LGBT events throughout the school as you would any other cultural celebration. Celebrate the Day Against Homophobia in May or LGBT Pride Month in June, by displaying signs, alerting students and recognizing the struggles, contributions and victories of the LGBT community. Support students' measures to address LGBT issues, such as a Gay–Straight Alliance (see below). Work with students to celebrate the Day of Pink and No Name-Calling Week. Encourage LGBT inclusion in other school events such as prom or Valentine's Day celebrations.

For suggestions about events and activities aimed at inspiring dialogue about ways to eliminate name-calling and bullying, promoting acceptance and celebrating diversity, see the sections '**Classroom activities: preschool-elementary**' and '**Classroom activities: high school**'.

« *One day a female student came to speak to me about homophobic insults that she was constantly hearing in the hallways. Feeling empathy for her best friend who was gay, she wanted to organize a sensitization activity. Because I had spoken about homosexuality in class through a literary work, she saw me as a potential ally to help her carry out her project. We decided that the International Day Against Homophobia would be the best moment to carry it out. I accompanied and supported her when she asked permission from the school's administration. On May 17th, with the help of three friends, she set up a booth in the cafeteria. A map illustrating the rights of sexual minorities around the world was installed at the entrance of the room, and posters were hung throughout the school. Finally, a clip about homophobia in high school was heard on our school radio station. Two weeks later, I helped the student prepare her candidature for the GRIS Simple Plan Foundation Prize. Even though the project didn't win first prize, her project made visible an issue that is rarely spoken about at school – it helped to denounce homophobia.*

FRENCH TEACHER SAGUENAY

For more information: www.gris.ca/lesgrisduquebec/prix_gris_simple-plan.html

SPONSOR A GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE

17

Sponsor a Gay-Straight Alliance and act as a mentor and resource for participants.

Gay-straight student alliances (GSAs) are student-run and teacher-supported school-based groups that work to create safe, caring and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ students and their allies in schools. Typically, GSAs are designed to provide a safe space for students to meet, socialize and support one another as they discuss their feelings and experiences related to sexual orientation and gender identity issues. In schools with GSAs students report feeling safer, less likely to be harassed for their differences, and more supported by the adults around them. These factors are recipes for academic success.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation offers an excellent guide on how to set up Gay-Straight Student Alliances (GSAs): www.ctf-fce.ca (View publications catalogue).

« *I participated in creating a committee for heterosexual, bisexual and gay students, teachers and other school staff. First we put up posters to let students know about the existence of the group. We used the artistic talents of some of the students to create a logo and a banner – that gave our committee some visibility. Then we organized some extracurricular activities. Even though these activities were quite modest, they helped a number of students break away from their isolation. Some youth were questioning their sexual orientation; others were there simply to support their gay, lesbian and bisexual friends. The presence and support of adults helped give the project some stability in the beginning and also served to help the youth gain confidence. I think it has really been felt in terms of the school climate. In the beginning, my involvement as a straight teacher really surprised some people. Many asked me if I was gay. Those questions were a good opportunity to sensitize people to the fact that homophobia concerns everyone.*

SCIENCE TEACHER BAS-SAINT-LAURENT »

ACQUIRE AND USE INCLUSIVE MATERIALS

18

Ensure that the school library and publications include resources that cover LGBT people and issues.

Ask your school librarian to create a display of books and resources on sex, gender and sexual orientation. If your school doesn't already carry books that are inclusive of LGBT individuals, you might want to make some suggestions for books that can be purchased. Put up posters and brochures in your classroom that celebrate accomplishments by diverse people (women, LGBT people, people of colour, etc.).

For links to books and films, see '[Classroom activities: preschool-elementary](#)', '[Classroom activities: high school](#)', and the module '[Books about Sexual and Gender Diversity](#)'.

ENCOURAGE FAMILIES

19

Reach out to families with LGBT parents to let them know that their input and involvement are welcome.

20

Reach out to the parents of LGBTQ youth (if the youth allow you to) to help youth with self-acceptance and coming-out.

The school should welcome families with LGBT parents in the same way as other families are included. Schools can encourage LGBT parents to participate in the governing board, in parents' committees, and for volunteer opportunities that welcome parent involvement. Schools can also show support by displaying posters that include diverse families and by updating all forms and documents to include words like 'Parent' or 'Guardian' instead of 'Mother' and 'Father'. Whenever possible, include examples of diverse families, including families with LGBT parents, when referencing families in the classroom or at school assemblies. Providing these examples can help LGBTQ students and students with LGBT family members to feel included in the school community.

When LGBTQ students reach out to you, their experiences must, of course, be kept confidential. When it is possible, however, cooperation with parents should be encouraged. Youth must always give their authorization before you can approach parents. When schools accept and reach out to LGBTQ youth, doors are opened to provide a continuum of acceptance at home. Schools become resources for parents who are trying to understand and adjust to their LGBTQ children. It may take family members much discussion and counselling before being able to accept their sexual minority child. The school can be a valuable resource to parents struggling with the necessary adjustments.

ENCOURAGE FAMILIES (CONTINUED)

For community and health resources for youth and their families see the sections '[LGBTQ youth and their parents](#)' and '[Families with LGBTQ parents](#)'.

« *Last year a student told me that she was gay. I was the first person to know. At 15 years old she was afraid of her parents' reaction. I supported her throughout the whole acceptance process. When she told her parents, I was there to accompany them as well. I helped them to express their emotions and overcome the shock. Even though family relations were quite strained, I was still able to follow the young girl and her parents over the months. Because school is so central to youth, I had to include her family in what was going on at school as well.* »

PSYCHOEDUCATOR LAVAL

This module contains a wide variety of potential actions. In an ideal world, all of these suggestions could be implemented. If not, or if only limited interventions are possible, it is important to remember that even a small action can have a big impact. It is also possible to create an intervention plan with several steps.

END NOTES

- 1 Dijkstra, Lindenberg & Veenstra, 2007; Meyer, 2006, 2009.
- 2 California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004.
- 3 Dorais, 2001.
- 4 Saewyc, 2007.
- 5 Hatzenbuehler, 2011.
- 6 Kosciw et al., 2008; van Wormer & McKinney, 2003; Dorais, 2001; *Conseil permanent de la jeunesse*, 2007.
- 7 Chamberland et al., 2010.
- 8 Kosciw et al., 2010; Russel et al., 2006.
- 9 Carr, 1997; Dinham, Cairney, Craigie & Wilson, 1995; Fullan, 2000; Riehl, 2000.

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