



FACT SHEET ON BULLYING OF LGBTQ2SIA+ YOUTH

KEY FACTS ABOUT LGBTQ2SIA+ YOUTH EXPERIENCES

The following facts are taken from *Every Class in Every School*, a national Canadian survey of high school youth published in 2011.

1. Every day, youth hear language that insults LGBTQ2SIA+ people.

- **70%** of all youth (including non-LGBTQ2SIA+) say they hear insulting expressions every day in school; **48%** of all youth report hearing homophobic slurs every day in school.
- **86%** of LGBTQ2SIA+ youth and **58%** of non-LGBTQ2SIA+ youth say they are upset by such language. Youth report that teachers often look the other way when they hear homophobic and transphobic comments and some teachers even make these kinds of comments themselves.

2. Bullying, discrimination, harassment and other abuse are experienced at high rates for LGBTQ2SIA+ youth:

- **21%** of LGBTQ2SIA+ youth and **8%** of non-LGBTQ2SIA+ youth are physically harassed or assaulted because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender expression.
- **55%** of LGBTQ2SIA+ youth and **26%** of non-LGBTQ2SIA+ youth are verbally harassed about their gender expression.
- **49%** of male and **36%** of female LGBTQ2SIA+ youth report being sexually harassed compared to **23%** of male and **17%** of female non-LGBTQ2SIA+ youth.

3. Most LGBTQ2SIA+ youth do not feel safe at school:

- **53%** of LGBTQ2SIA+ youth say they feel unsafe at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation compared to **3%** of non-LGBTQ2SIA+ youth.

4. Youth with LGBTQ2SIA+ parents suffer high rates of bullying and harassment:

- **27%** of youth with LGBTQ2SIA+ parents report being physically harassed about their parents' sexual orientation.
- They are more than twice as likely as non-LGBTQ2+ youth to be physically harassed or assaulted because of their own gender expression, perceived sexual orientation or gender identity and gender.
- They are three times more likely than their peers to skip school because they feel unsafe.

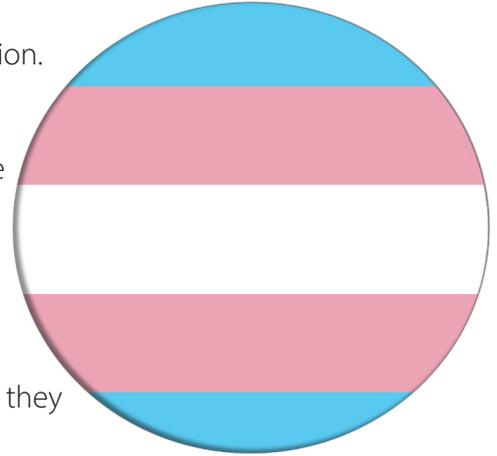
5. LGBTQ2SIA+ youth are especially vulnerable if they belong to another group that suffers from systemic discrimination:

- **59%** of female LGBTQ2SIA+ youth report feeling unsafe in their school change rooms.
- LGBTQ2SIA+ youth of colour are more likely to say that they do not have even one person they can talk to about LGBTQ2SIA+ matters.



6. Transgender youth are particularly vulnerable to bullying and in need of support at school.

- Trans youth are frequent targets of harassment and discrimination, even from other LGBTQ2SIA+ youth.
- Transphobia is not commonly discussed and is frequently overlooked even within the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.
- **90%** of trans youth hear other youth use transphobic language daily or weekly.
- **78%** of trans youth feel unsafe in some way at school.
- **74%** of trans youth are verbally harassed about their gender expression.
- **64%** of trans youth have been taunted or ridiculed in the past year.
- **44%** of trans youth report skipping school because they feel unsafe.
- **36%** of trans youth have been physically threatened or injured in the past year.
- **33%** of trans youth have been bullied or picked on through the internet in the past year.
- **23%** of trans youth hear teachers use transphobic language daily or weekly.
- **15%** of trans youth have skipped more than 10 school days because they feel unsafe.
- **9%** of trans youth have been threatened or injured with a weapon in the past year.



HOW CAN TEACHERS REDUCE VICTIMIZATION OF LGBTQ2SIA+ YOUTH?

1. Make your classroom a safe and respectful space.

- Make it clear that you're an ally to LGBTQ2SIA+ youth by using inclusive language (e.g., "parents", rather than "mother and father" and "partner" instead of "boyfriend or girlfriend"). Provide a mix of both LGBTQ2SIA+ and non-LGBTQ2SIA+ examples in classroom discussions (e.g., transgender figures in history and popular culture).
- Remind all youth that everyone is entitled to full respect, safety and acceptance in the classroom. Emphasize that "everyone" includes LGBTQ2SIA+ youth. Youth may agree to this commitment as part of a Classroom Code of Conduct.
- Avoid unintentionally divisive procedures like composing teams on the basis of assigned sex. One alternative is to separate youth using birth month.
- Explain to all youth that it is very important not to make assumptions about individuals' sexual orientation, gender or gender expression based on stereotypes about their assigned sex. Emphasize that heterosexual cisgender identities are not suitable for everyone. Sexual orientation and gender are fluid and fall on a continuum rather than being fixed.
- Discuss various forms of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation whenever relevant. For example, in:
 - **English Language Arts:** Discuss writers and characters who challenge gender restrictions.
 - **History:** Discuss the positive recognition of LGBTQ2SIA+ identities in pre-contact North America and the oppression of LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals in Nazi Germany.
 - **Social Studies:** Discuss the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and same-sex marriage.
 - **Health:** Ensure sexual health discussions are inclusive and comprehensive of LGBTQ2SIA+ identities.
 - **Guidance:** Discuss healthy same-sex relationships.
- Challenge normative ideas of gender and gender roles. Deconstruct gender categories and ask youth to question gender stereotypes. Promote a respectful, inclusive and open discussion.

2. Address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language immediately.

- Be respectful, consistent and patient in reminding youth that this type of language is disrespectful and hurtful. Be careful not to single out any particular youth as victims.
- If disrespectful language is used in the classroom, refer back to the Classroom Code of Conduct.
- Turn current events and classroom incidents into learning opportunities. Generate a discussion about what negative comments mean, what they imply, and how this language impacts people. For example, see NoHomophobes.com. Caution: This site streams re-tweets with homophobic and offensive language.

3. Support youth efforts to build an LGBTQ2SIA+ inclusive school environment.

- LGBTQ2SIA+ youth may feel isolated from the rest of the school community.
- The majority of youth find bullying of LGBTQ2SIA+ youth unacceptable. However, they may not stand up for LGBTQ2SIA+ youth because they don't know what to do or fear becoming targets of bullying themselves. Youth may need help from adults to support both LGBTQ2SIA+ and non-LGBTQ2SIA+ peers.
- Teachers can directly support the development of friendships and important connections that help LGBTQ2SIA+ youth find social support and inclusion among their peers.
- Examples of LGBTQ2SIA+ groups include Gay-Straight Alliances, Queer-Straight Alliances, Gender and Sexuality Alliances.

4. Encourage your school to implement inclusive and comprehensive sexual orientation and gender identity policies and initiatives.

- When inclusive policies and initiatives are in place, LGBTQ2SIA+ youth:
 - Feel safer at school and are less likely to be bullied.
 - Are exposed to fewer anti-LGBTQ2SIA+ comments.
 - Are more likely to receive support from teachers when such comments are made.
 - Are more likely to report harassment or assault.
 - Are more likely to talk to teachers, principals, counselors, coaches and classmates.
- **80%** of LGBTQ2SIA+ youth from schools with inclusive policies report never having been physically harassed.

5. Become aware of LGBTQ2SIA+-inclusive legislation and school district policies.

- Public funded school systems across Canada strongly support LGBTQ2+-inclusive education. Many teacher organizations can provide relevant information and resources for teachers.



DEFINITIONS

It is important to be familiar with and understand the definitions of terms commonly used in the LGBTQ2SIA+ community. Remember that terms, definitions, and preferred language are always evolving. The most important thing is to be respectful and to use the terms that people prefer.

▣ Asexual

A person who does not experience sexual attraction, or who has little to no interest in sexual activity.

▣ Bisexual

A person who experiences physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to the same, other, or more than one gender.

▣ Cisgender

A term used to refer to someone whose gender identity matches their assigned sex at birth (e.g., a male who identifies as a man).

▣ Gay

A person who experiences attraction to the same gender as themselves. May be used by individuals of any gender, but is most often used to describe male-identified people who are attracted to other male-identified people.

▣ Gender Expression

The way that a person shows their gender identity through clothing, speech, body language, use of makeup, accessories, and so forth to display masculinity, femininity, or androgyny.

▣ Genderfluid

A person whose gender identity is experienced on a spectrum that varies over time.

▣ Gender Identity

A person's internal sense or feeling of their own gender. A person's gender identity may align with their biological sex assigned at birth. If not, they may identify as transgender, non-binary, genderfluid, gender non-conforming, or more.

▣ Gender Roles

Societal and cultural expectations of what it means to act appropriately for one's assigned sex (e.g., behaviours that are considered to be feminine or masculine). Gender roles are often associated with gender expression and the display of gendered behaviour. These roles are driven by stereotypical ideas rather than any connection between assigned sex and gender roles.

▣ Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia

Any type of bullying, intolerance or harm directed toward people because they are or are thought to be LGBTQ2SIA+.

▣ Intersex

A person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside of the conventional classifications of male or female.

■ **Lesbian**

The adjective used to describe female-identified people who are physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other female-identified people.

■ **Pansexual**

A person who experiences physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to someone regardless of gender.

■ **Pronouns**

Pronouns used in everyday speech and writing often imply gender, and so using someone's correct gender pronouns is one of the easiest ways to show your respect for their identity. She/Her, He/Him, and They/Them are the most commonly used pronouns, although there are more options. If you're unsure which pronouns to use, you can politely ask.

■ **Queer**

An umbrella term which encompasses a variety of sexual orientations and gender expressions. Queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTQ2SIA+ people to describe themselves, however it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.

■ **Sex**

A person's perceived biological status typically categorized as male, female or intersex. The sex assigned at birth, based on external genitalia, may or may not correspond to their internal sexual characteristics or to their sense of self. It is important to refrain from making assumptions about someone's gender or sexual orientation based on their biological sex.

■ **Sexual Identity**

A person's identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual or another sexual orientation category.

■ **Sexual Orientation**

A person's emotional and sexual attraction to another person. This attraction may be toward people of the same gender, the opposite gender, or more than one gender. Other sexual orientations include asexual, pansexual, and more.

■ **Transgender**

A person whose gender identity or gender expression does not correspond with their assigned sex at birth. Being transgender is not dependant upon medical procedures.

■ **Two Spirit**

Two Spirit is used by some Indigenous peoples to describe their gender, sexual, and spiritual identity.