

A close-up photograph of a hand with the index and middle fingers extended. The fingers are painted with horizontal stripes of the rainbow colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The background is a solid, light blue color. The text is centered over the hand.

**A Practical Guide to Welcoming
Sexual and Gender Diversity in
Colleges and Universities**

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Introduction

Why a guide?

Québec society aims to be inclusive and respectful of minorities' rights. With respect to the rights of gay people, Québec showed that it was forward-thinking by including sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination in the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms starting in 1977. Over the decades that followed, a series of legislative changes in both Québec and Canada brought legal recognition and protection to same-sex couples and their families.

More recently, the Government of Québec innovated once again by adopting the *Québec Policy Against Homophobia* in 2009 (Gouvernement du Québec 2009). This ambitious policy invited the State to take action, along with all organizations and individuals, to fight homophobia (in the broadest sense of the term), and to fully recognize and accept sexual and gender minorities in all spheres of activity. In 2011, the *Government Action Plan Against Homophobia 2011-2016* proposed a series of measures that would concretize the policy's key orientations (Gouvernement du Québec 2011).

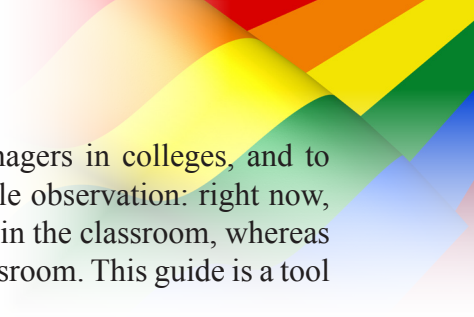
In the education sector, studies documented the ways that homophobia manifests in schools, as well as the violence, bullying and online bullying in which homophobia often features prominently. Media attention to these phenomena also helped to raise awareness both among the general public and among education-sector workers and managers. A number of initiatives bore witness to a collective desire to take action – among others, a ministerial action plan was adopted, called *Violence in the Schools: Let's Work on It Together!*, along with a legislative framework, Bill 56, which aimed to prevent and combat bullying and violence at school. Coalition groups, such as the Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie des réseaux de l'éducation¹ and the Table provinciale de concertation sur la violence, fostered the sharing of strategies and intervention tools.

Openness toward others, tolerance toward difference, and acceptance of diversity in all its forms are all social issues that are particularly relevant to teaching institutions at all levels of education. In colleges and universities, homophobia may seem less of a serious concern, because it has not had the same level of media visibility. Still, it remains present, and can manifest in insidious ways. Heterosexism embedded in the ways that colleges and universities are organized and operated also creates obstacles to the full integration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgender people (LGBT).²

The *Practical Guide to Welcoming Sexual and Gender Diversity in Colleges and Universities* provides a snapshot of the measures that can be implemented, to great benefit, in colleges and universities with a view to reducing instances of homophobia. The goal is to create a welcoming and safe environment that supports all students' academic progress. This guide aims to be concrete: it focuses on practices that have already been put into place in institutions of higher learning in Québec.

¹ This group brings together the key players in the school and college network. It is made up, among others, of representatives from the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES), unions that operate in these networks, school board and CEGEP board federations, the Fédération des comités de parents, and student associations.

² In this guide, we use the term “trans” to mean transsexual and transgender people. See the section entitled A Few Definitions on page 12.



This guide is mainly addressed to front-line workers and student affairs managers in colleges, and to student services in universities. The idea behind the guide comes from a simple observation: right now, publications about homophobia are mostly focused on activities that take place in the classroom, whereas very few of them address the question of good practices adopted outside the classroom. This guide is a tool designed to meet this specific need.³

This document may also be of interest to teaching staff, administrators, students, parents, and anyone who works in the field of higher education.

3 This guide was produced as part of the implementation of measure 4 from the *Government Action Plan Against Homophobia 2011-2016*: “Make college and university student service providers aware of the problem of homophobia and the realities faced by sexual minority youth and gay parent families, in order to promote the development of local and regional initiatives to combat homophobia and promote the sharing of knowledge.” (Gouvernement du Québec 2011, p. 4)

Reasons to take action

Overview of the current situation

According to a study carried out in 2008 with 1844 CEGEP students from 26 CEGEPs across the province (Chamberland et al. 2011), homophobic violence is fully present in college settings, although less widespread than in high schools. Among students who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual, or who were questioning their sexual orientation (LGBQ)⁴, nearly a quarter reported having been targeted in at least one homophobic incident during their school year. The most frequent incidents were gossip and rumours aiming to damage someone's reputation, followed very closely by insults and teasing, rejection or exclusion from groups, and lastly online bullying. About seven out of ten students said they often or occasionally heard denigrating comments, such as "that's so gay," in their surroundings. Incidents involving physical violence are not widespread – but this doesn't diminish their seriousness when they occur. Homophobic acts are rarely reported to the authorities.

The school environment is also influenced by the ripple effect of homophobic incidents, even when a given young person is not the direct victim. As such, 45% of students surveyed said they witnessed or heard about such incidents, which perpetuates the idea that expressing your homosexuality puts you at risk of attracting negative reactions.

Demonstrations of homophobia also target young people for their gender non-conformity, meaning that their appearance, manner, clothing choices, tastes or other features don't match up with social norms for gender, meaning masculinity for boys and femininity for girls. These people are then perceived, and labeled, as gay or lesbian because they look the part. As such, many students may be victims of homophobic comments or behaviours because others, correctly or incorrectly, see them as gay, or because they don't fit within dominant gender norms (Richard and Chamberland 2014).

Young trans people experience both homophobia and transphobia in their school environment. They are often labeled as gay or lesbian because of their atypical gender expression, in many cases from the moment they enter elementary or high school. They are also often faced with others' refusal to recognize their self-identified gender: for example, people refuse to use their chosen name and the corresponding pronoun (*he* or *she*). Young trans people report that they have experienced exclusion and rejection, harassment and verbal assault (insults, threats, teasing) and physical assault (being locked in a locker, being beaten up) (Chamberland, Baril and Duchesne 2011).

There were areas I tried to avoid as much as I could. At the entrance to the CEGEP, I often had to pass by them. The whole clique was laughing, making jokes: "Ooh, the fags!" They never attacked me directly, but they said it so loudly that it was obviously intended for me.

(Martin, 21, gay)

⁴ This study asked students about their attractions and their sexual behaviours, as well as how they identify in terms of their sexual orientation. The students were not asked about their gender identity. Another prong of the study dealt with trans youth.

When measured using a homonegativity scale⁵, boys' attitudes toward gay and lesbian people is significantly more negative than girls' attitudes. The school climate relative to homophobia seems more problematic in programs with a high concentration of men (over 70% men). Beyond negative attitudes and remarks, a higher proportion of students enrolled in these programs say they have committed a homophobic act (Chamberland et al. 2011).

Sports activities seem particularly problematic according to many young people, in particular team sports and elite sports (Lajeunesse 2008; Viel and Demers 2013). Demonstrations of homophobia differ based on athletes' sex: young men fear coming out about their sexual orientation out of concern that they'll be seen as incompetent in their sport, while young women are labeled as lesbians when they take part in activities that are competitive or that involve roughness. For their part, young trans people are marginalized when sports activities and infrastructures are organized based on a strict gender division (male and female).

As such, the climate relative to homophobia and transphobia varies within a given establishment, particularly according to programs, types of activity and the young people in question. It's important to document problematic situations in each establishment in order to discern the most appropriate types of intervention.

To our knowledge, there are no studies on homophobia and transphobia in Québec universities.


Impacts on LGBT youth

Homophobia and transphobia have numerous impacts, and can harm young people in terms of both their scholarly success and their mental health. When it comes to scholarly success, the documented impacts include absenteeism, a sense of lack of safety in the school environment, difficulty concentrating, a weaker sense of belonging at school, and more limited scholarly aspirations. All these are factors that in turn predict higher risks of dropping out or lower persistence in school (Chamberland, Richard and Bernier 2011, Kosciw et al. 2014, Taylor 2011). These effects are all the stronger when violence occurs frequently or takes a range of different forms. Taken together, these effects are more pronounced among LGBTQ students than among their heterosexual peers, among other things because the former are less likely to be able to count on support from their friends or family members.

Homophobic and transphobic violence is also associated with the occurrence of major mental health problems, such as mood difficulties (sadness, withdrawal, anxiety), psychological distress, strong feelings of shame and isolation, low self-esteem, depressive episodes, and an increased risk of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Cénat et al. 2015, Dorais 2014, Dorais and Chamberland 2013).

LGBT young people who attend CEGEP appreciate their college environment, and perceive it as less hostile than high school (Chamberland et al. 2011). Sexual and gender diversity is more visible there, whether through symbols, the presence of an LGBT association or support group, LGBT-related activities, or within their course-related learning or in impromptu comments made by teachers (Chouinard 2010). Nevertheless, when they arrive at college, many young people are already psychologically scarred from the experiences they've had or things they saw while in high school, and it doesn't take much to recall painful memories and bring them back to feeling unsafe.

⁵ This measurement of attitudes toward homosexuality relies less on moral or religious arguments, and takes into account aspects understood as pragmatic. The statements relate to contemporary issues, for example "Gays and lesbians should stop imposing themselves on others with their lifestyles" or "Gays and lesbians have become much too demanding in their claims to equal rights."



It's maybe because we were walking on eggshells for five years [in high school], we get to CEGEP and we really don't want to talk about it. It's true that CEGEP is more open to talking about it, but we were so traumatized in high school.

(Étienne, 23, gay)

It was really a very positive step, the change to CEGEP. I felt that it was clearly more open. I knew people who were comfortable talking about their gay friends. That's when I also started talking about it in CEGEP.

(Paul, 21, gay)

The young people interviewed reported “reading” their school environment and placing great importance on the smallest signs of openness or, on the other hand, of intolerance toward sexual diversity. Positive discourse on sexual and gender diversity and the presence of openly LGBT individuals who are respected and well-integrated are positive signs. With this in mind, a general policy against violence, harassment or discrimination will have a greater effect on young people’s perception if it includes sexual orientation and gender identity, and above all, if it’s paired with educational work to raise awareness about the policy (Chamberland et al. 2011).

Young people identify three types of factors that facilitate their resilience and help them to pursue their schooling (Petit et al. 2011):

1. personal factors, such as self-acceptance and coming out;
2. interpersonal factors, such as the support provided by students or staff members when homophobic or transphobic incidents take place, or after coming out;
3. community factors, such as the presence of a support group that provides a safe space and a place to socialize with peers.

To create a college or university environment that’s welcoming and safe-feeling, we must put into place a set of measures that aim not only to prevent homophobia and transphobia, but also to recognize and value sexual and gender diversity.

LGBT youth: a diversified group

While they are grouped under a single acronym, LGBT youth form a diversified set of individuals, whose realities, problems and needs may differ from one another. This brief section draws attention to certain sub-groups. Its chief aim is to invite workers and student affairs managers in colleges, and student services in universities, to consider this diversity of situations when designing and implementing practices aiming to create openness to sexual and gender diversity.

The identity process for young lesbians can be complicated by the social invisibility of lesbianism, the lack of positive role models, and the many types of pressure from loved ones who push them to conform to the norms of heterosexual femininity (Lebreton 2014). Consequently, they often come out later than their gay peers. While they are less affected by physical violence as compared to gay men, they are more often exposed to sexual violence (harassment, assault) that targets them as both women and lesbians (Chamberland et al. 2013, Dorais 2014).

Young people who come out as bisexual face a number of prejudices coming from both straight and gay people. Among these prejudices, which attempt to invalidate their sexual orientation, we find the idea that bisexuality is a phase of experimentation and confusion, a transition step before “getting it” or an inability to accept their homosexuality or lesbianism. Bisexuality is often associated with hypersexuality, a promiscuous sex life for men and extreme (hetero)sexual availability for women (Médico and Fortin 2008, Fortin et al. 2009).

For young trans people, gender-segregated activities and spaces (locker rooms, bathrooms, physical education classes) are the source of numerous difficulties (Chamberland et al. 2011). For example, a young trans person can feel anxious or experience rejection when they must use spaces reserved for one or the other sex. In the absence of inclusive measures in their establishments, they must ask the staff to accommodate them by using their new names, potentially exposing themselves once again to misunderstanding and rejection. In seeking ad hoc arrangements, they are obliged to tell their life story to many people and hope for their goodwill. Workers often lack the skills and resources to provide them with proper support.

LGBT youth from ethnocultural minorities, born in Québec, Canada or abroad, may experience tensions or identity conflicts between the various groups they belong to (Paillé 2011). They may encounter lack of understanding in their milieu of origin (family, friends), but we must avoid making hasty generalizations in this respect. They may also feel discomfort or isolation in LGBT organizations that aren’t culturally diverse or where cultural diversity is not recognized. When they discover LGBT resources that bring together cultural minorities, they perceive this as a positive experience in their identity-building process.

Lastly, let’s not forget that LGBT students in college and university may wish to become parents, or may already have a parenting role. While Québec has legally recognized same-sex parenting since 2002, institutions may not have all adapted their forms and services to concretely recognize the diversity of family configurations. As well, if work-school balance is a challenge for these students, just like for other parents, they may also need specific assistance or resources.

Sexual and gender diversity is a constantly changing phenomenon. Witness the constant appearance of new terms (ex.: queer, pansexual, bigender, genderqueer) that reflect as many nuances of identity or positions in regard to the models available in our culture. In 2015, this movement makes it difficult to know what terms will survive the LGBT community’s multiple efforts at clarification, given that the acronym “LGBT” is itself sometimes called into question. For now, the important thing is to remain aware of this, and to ask the people you’re dealing with what vocabulary they prefer to use.

When I came out, I noticed that Black people treated me like a traitor, as if I wanted to become white. [At the LGBT support group] most people were Caucasian. I felt alone because they weren’t people from the same culture as me. We didn’t have very much in common other than being gay. I would have liked there to be more Black people or more LGBT people from other ethnic origins so we could meet and talk more about the things that concern us.

(Hendrick, 19, gay)

Sexual and gender diversity: a practical guide

A few definitions

The vocabulary of sexual diversity is evolving quickly. New terms are constantly appearing, and their meanings are not yet stabilized. Here, we offer a short list of a few essential definitions. To become familiar with the vocabulary and adopt terms that are inclusive and respectful of sexual and gender diversity, you can refer to these sources:

- Comprehensive list of LGBTQ + term definitions <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions>
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual glossary of terms <http://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-a-z-glossary>
- Lexique LGBT sur la diversité sexuelle et de genre en milieu de travail, Chambre de commerce LGBT du Québec (CCLGBTQ). French-language glossary with English translations of terms. <http://cclgbtq.ca/lexique-lgbt-sur-la-diversite-sexuelle-et-de-genre-en-milieu-de-travail/>
- LGBTQI Terminology <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>
- Veltman, A. and Chaimowitz, G. (2014). Mental Health Care for People Who Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and (or) Queer, “Glossary of Terms” section, Position Paper, Canadian Psychiatric Association. <http://publications.cpa-apc.org/media.php?mid=1782>

Bisexuality, bisexual

Person attracted to men and women, and who can establish emotional, affective or sexual relationships with both men and women, though not necessarily to the same degree or at the same time (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014).

Biphobia

Negative attitudes that can lead to rejection and discrimination, direct or indirect, against bisexual people. This term calls upon us to name and denounce the prejudices and forms of discrimination that specifically affect bisexual people, such as the idea that bisexuality is a passing phase or is synonymous with instability.

Cissexism

Presumption that people conform to society’s sex-specific norms, more precisely to the binary vision of the world that’s structured by only two genders that correspond with only two sexes (female and male). This system of thinking, which sees itself as normal and natural, attempts to regulate gender identity, and in so doing, excludes people who are intersex, transgender, transsexual or genderqueer (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014).

Heterosexism

Affirmation of heterosexuality as a social norm or the highest form of sexual orientation; social practice that conceals the diversity of sexual orientations and identities in everyday representations, social relations and social institutions, in particular by taking for granted that all people are heterosexual (Gouvernement du Québec 2011).

Homophobia

All negative attitudes leading to the rejection of and direct or indirect discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgenders, or against persons whose appearance or behaviour does not conform to masculine or feminine stereotypes (Gouvernement du Québec 2011).

Originally created to mean an aversion or hatred toward gay men, this concept then expanded to explicitly take into account the prejudices and specific forms of hostility and rejection aimed at certain groups. As such, we can also refer to lesbophobia, biphobia, transphobia, serophobia or LGBT-phobias.

Homosexuality, homosexual

The term “homosexual” means someone who feels emotional, romantic and (or) sexual attraction toward a person of the same sex or gender. As this term is historically associated with a medical model of homosexuality, most people would prefer to self-identify as gay, lesbian or queer (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014).

Gender identity

A person’s subjective experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to their biological sex or sex assigned at birth. A person may identify as a man, a woman, or somewhere between these two poles, independently of their biological sex.

Lesbianism, lesbian

The term “lesbian” is used for a girl or woman whose primary sexual orientation is to other girls or women or who self-identifies as a member of the lesbian community (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014).

Lesbophobia

Negative attitudes that may lead to rejection and discrimination, direct and indirect, toward lesbians. The term calls upon us to name and denounce prejudices and forms of discrimination that specifically affect lesbians, such as the erasure of lesbianism or its distortion in heterosexual pornographic representations. It also underscores how lesbians may also be subjected to sexist prejudices and discrimination.

LGBT

Acronym designating people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual/transgender/trans. The acronym can take a range of forms depending on the identities that are included. The following letters may be added: Q for queer or to designate people who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity; 2S for two-spirit; I for intersex people; T for transvestites; A for allies or for asexuals. A + sign or an asterisk (*) placed at the end of the acronym indicates the potential inclusion of other identities that aren’t yet represented by a letter.

Sexual minorities, sexual and gender minorities

Expression that refers to people and groups minoritized due to their bodies or bodily appearance, sexual behaviours, sexual orientations, gender identities, or family structures that don't conform to cultural norms of sexuality and gender, and who are therefore exposed to stigma and discrimination (Chamberland and Saewyc 2011).

Queer

The term “queer” designates people who identify as such, or who feel attractions that go against the dominant norms of sexual orientation or gender identity (Laprade 2014). In English, the term is also used as an inclusive, unifying, sociopolitical and self-affirming umbrella term encompassing a broad range of sexual and gender expression, including people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, genderqueer or any other nonheterosexual sexuality or nonconforming gender identity (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014).

Questioning

People who are uncertain about their sexual orientation or gender identity, or who present themselves as being in a state of questioning (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014).

Serophobia

Negative attitudes that may lead to rejection and discrimination, direct and indirect, toward people living with HIV. This term calls upon us to name and denounce the prejudices and forms of discrimination that specifically affect these people, such as the idea that HIV-positive people were asking for it or that getting AIDS is their fault.

Sexism

Attitude or behaviour that discriminates on the basis of a person's sex, most often to the detriment of women.

Transsexuality, transsexual

Person who has a gender identity that is not in keeping with their physical body. Transsexual people typically experience discomfort with this disparity and seek to modify their body through hormones and (or) surgical procedures to bring their bodies closer to their gender identity (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014).

Transgender, trans

Person whose gender identity or expression differs from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity (Veltman and Chaimowitz 2014). The terms “transgender” and “trans” may also have an umbrella meaning, and may include people who identify as cross-dressers, transsexuals, two-spirit, intersex and genderqueer.

Transphobia

All negative attitudes leading to the rejection of and direct or indirect discrimination against transsexuals, transgenders and transvestites, or against persons who cross the lines of gender and sex or of gender and sex representations (Gouvernement du Québec 2011).

Notes on methodology

We carried out two processes to gather examples of inclusive practices toward sexual and gender diversity, applicable to Québec colleges and universities:

1. Document-based research: This research was useful for identifying suggested practices that flow from studies on the difficulties encountered by LGBT students, or that have been put into practice in institutions primarily located in English Canada and the United States. We established two observations:
 - a) in general, the suggested practices have not been subject to any implementation studies or evaluations;
 - b) some practices are not applicable, or may need to be adapted to the Québec context, where the way education levels are organized – particularly the unique character of the college level – and institutional cultures are different from the rest of North America.
2. A series of interviews: To learn about examples of practices employed in Québec, we met with professionals from nine colleges and two universities for short interviews.⁷ These schools were selected based on information about the initiatives they have taken to foster openness toward sexual and gender diversity and to make student life services more inclusive. The interviews helped us to confirm and flesh out this information, and to enrich the range of ideas and possible courses of action that have had positive impacts according to the people we interviewed.

It's important to set out the limits of this guide. First of all, it is not an in-depth list of practices for openness to sexual and gender diversity across all of Québec's institutions of higher learning. So we do not claim that this is exhaustive, especially since the growing awareness of homophobia and transphobia in recent years has led to a proliferation of very diverse initiatives. Secondly, this guide suggests practices that have been deemed desirable or worthy of recommendation according to the literature and professionals we interviewed. In the absence of assessment studies, it is impossible to qualify these as "best practices" in the strict sense of the term. It's up to each institution to diagnose their own situation (problems, needs, available means, etc.) and to use this guide to find courses of action that seem the most appropriate, and whose ideas are the most stimulating.

We hope that this guide helps inspire you or point you toward concrete, helpful action toward ensuring the well-being of LGBT students and encouraging all students as they progress through college and university.

⁷ See the list of people interviewed in the Acknowledgements section.

How do we take action? A few keys to institutional change

The information gathered throughout our document-based research on welcoming practices for sexual and gender diversity is, in the end, relatively similar to that gathered in our interviews. To be concise and avoid useless repetition, we are focusing only on the key general points of this research so as to present an overall vision of the actions that can be implemented in college and university settings in regard to LGBT people's experiences.

One key aspect is that it's important to not only take practical action, but also to do so using a concerted approach. Any action, no matter how good, if only applied by one person, will ultimately have very little impact unless other concerned parties work in the same vein. To ensure this kind of collaboration, the management, staff members and all students must be informed about policies and rules relative to sexual and gender diversity. This is why it's essential to make institutional policies easily accessible, perfectly understandable, and as inclusive as possible, by referring to LGBT people explicitly.

Next, the staff and students can develop smaller-scale actions within the institution by looking to the institutional guidelines and policies that are in place, knowing that management supports them. If we really want to see change happen, it's best to define precise, tangible and realistic targets, and to assign responsibility to specific people so that the work gets done concretely.

It's also important to make sure to listen to what individuals are feeling and to the needs they express. Directly surveying the LGBT student population is an excellent way to get an idea of their everyday reality and the solutions they themselves may have thought of. Asking staff directly about their training needs in this area is also the best way to learn about lacunae that exist among the various workers, and to remedy them effectively.

Evidently, we must remember that homophobic and transphobic behaviours will not disappear overnight. But in working together, we can make them less and less present within institutions of higher learning. It goes without saying that awareness-raising and training about sexual and gender diversity remain the best methods to use if you really want to help reduce violence and dismantle prejudices about LGBT people. Spreading awareness about pro-LGBT initiatives and non-discrimination policies, disseminating the resources available within and outside the institution, and making knowledge about diversity accessible – all these are good ways to ensure that the community is represented and visible within institutions of higher learning, and in so doing, to work toward the well-being of everyone.

“Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. (...) It is more powerful than governments in breaking down barriers.”

Nelson Mandela



Inclusive practices

We grouped the practices we gathered into categories to make it easier to consult this guide. The main titles correspond to the principal axes and types of action recommended in the literature: general attitudes, institutional policies, residences and access to infrastructures, student life and associations, prevention and training.

The suggestions provided by the people we interviewed are presented as much as possible exactly as they were explained to us. Our prime objective was to create a robust list of concrete, practical actions that have already been taken in one school or another, even if this choice may lead to the impression of some repetition.

General attitudes

Behaviours and attitudes to adopt

- Act respectfully, in the spirit of welcoming, solidarity and inclusion.
- Recognize and confront homophobic, lesbophobic, biphobic and transphobic violence.
- Show a proactive attitude, for instance by speaking about your openness toward sexual and gender diversity, or showing vigilance in regard to situations that may be discriminatory.
- Keep the information you receive confidential.
- Use trans people's chosen names and pronouns without forcing them to come out.
- Don't make assumptions about anyone's sexual orientation, gender identity, family configuration or romantic or sexual relationships. Concretely, this may mean asking open-ended questions, using inclusive vocabulary, and moving away from heterosexist stereotypes.

Visibility

- Promote the school's initiatives against homophobia or against LGBT-phobias.
- Put up posters in the school; hand out pamphlets and pins. Tell people about the existence of safe spaces or student sexual and gender diversity associations.
- Put up posters from LGBT organizations in the school.
- Put up posters in the school to raise awareness about trans identities.
- Produce a monthly bulletin about LGBT events and needs.
- Ensure that institutional materials recognize and make visible the existence of LGBT people, both visually and in the language they use

Home-made poster created by CEGEP de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue representing students and staff members from the school. The poster reads (in French), "Would we still be friends if I were a lesbian? (gay, trans, etc.)" The impact is much more visible and direct since the students recognize the people and can thus better identify with them.



Recognition of diversity and awareness-raising activities

- Explicitly include LGBT people in the celebrations and events that take place in the school or on campus (dances and parties, for example).
- Educate people about the lives and accomplishments of LGBT people; underscore their successes, for example through photo exhibitions or film screenings.
- Organize events on sexual and gender diversity.
- Promote fundamental human rights and sexual rights as well as the rights of sexual minorities to be treated equally and with dignity and respect.
- Organize a theme week.
- Recognize that the lives of LGBT people may be affected by other forms of discrimination, particularly sexism, racism and ableism (discrimination against people with disabilities).

Institutional policies

Institution-wide non-discrimination policy

- This policy may take diverse forms, such as:
 - a. an anti-homophobia or LGBT-phobias policy specifically;
 - b. a code of conduct that includes a section on homophobia;
 - c. a policy against harassment or violence that includes a section about homophobia;
 - d. a declaration against homophobia signed by the school's board;
 - e. the adoption of a resolution stating that the institution fosters the inclusion of people who are members of gender and sexual minorities.
- Expressly include gender identity and gender expression along with sexual orientation in institutional policies.

- Foster the visibility of various sexual and gender minority groups in order to underscore the policies' inclusivity.
- Make all the institutional policies inclusive and consistent with one another.
- Call on all the school's stakeholders to contribute to formulating the non-discrimination policy or policy on the inclusion of sexual and gender minorities.
- Inform all people concerned about the establishment's policies using a range of means, for example:
 - a. online, using the school's website;
 - b. in the school agenda handed out at the beginning of the year;
 - c. in the information provided by the various student services;
 - d. in an email sent early in the year or in a reminder email sent at certain times of the year.

« Our clear policies lend weight to arguments. They can be used by anyone, particularly by the students, in order to call their colleagues to order (on Facebook, on the forums or simply at school). »

*— Katia Chandonnet-Morin,
CEGEP de Lévis-Lauzon*

Incidents of hostility or discrimination toward sexual and gender minorities

- Put into place a procedure for reporting incidents of hostility or discrimination toward one or more members of a sexual or gender minority.
- Ensure that people know about the procedure, and that it is simple and easy to follow.
- Guarantee confidentiality for the people who use it.
- Take reported incidents seriously, and include the people who report an incident in the process of seeking and implementing solutions.
- Do not require a conciliation process that requires the victim to come face to face with an assailant if the victim does not wish to, as this process may stop victims from wishing to take action in regard to a given situation.
- Follow up with the victim and with the person who committed the hostile or discriminatory acts.

Institutional assistance and support for LGBT people

- Create an entity to coordinate LGBT affairs within the college or within the university.
- Assign specific mandates for supporting LGBT people. Designate specific people to carry out these mandates. These people may, for instance, be:
 - a. an education advisor specialized in the issues or who has received training on sexual orientation and gender identity;
 - b. a student life services worker: nurse, psychologist, detached worker, psychosocial support worker, recreation worker, etc.;
 - c. a committee working against psychological and sexual harassment;
 - d. the human resources department in general.

- Harmonize projects among the various administrative units.
- Disseminate existing resources both within and outside the school.
- Provide references to organizations that can help people who are experiencing difficulties in relation to their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Work in collaboration with local organizations that support or defend the rights of LGBT people.
- Make everything easily accessible in hard copy (ex.: pamphlets available at student services, school agenda) and digitally (ex.: school's website, Facebook page, email to all students and staff).
- Encourage access to competent, attentive, sensitive and readily available advisors.

Assistance measures specific to trans people

- Put into place a simple policy or procedure that allows trans students, upon request, to use their chosen name and pronoun in the institution's internal documents, so that they are used, for instance, in correspondence, on student cards, and so forth.
 - a. If a person's civil status identity documents have not been changed (name change and sex designation change), their official documents cannot be changed; however, it is relatively easy to create a file attached to the school's official file in order to change the name used on student lists, grade sheets, etc., in order to make the person's experience within the school easier.
- Send name change information to all of the people and services concerned (registrar's office, orientation or individual learning assistance centre, teachers, etc.) to ensure that all files in the establishment are harmonized.
- In the medium term, develop a guide to orient trans students within the school. The guide should include, among other things, information about:
 - a. access to bathrooms, locker rooms and residences⁸;
 - b. photos for student cards;
 - c. transcript requests after a name change;
 - d. questions of harassment;
 - e. etc.

CEGEP de St-Jean-sur-Richelieu created a linked file system for trans people. This file, which includes the person's first name and pronoun of choice, is used throughout their time at the school, and makes it possible to harmonize their information for professors, management and so forth. The official file is used only to send information to the Ministry.

⁸ See the Residences and Access to Infrastructures section, p. 21.

Libraries and access to documentation

- Work in collaboration with the libraries and documentation access services.
- At the library and elsewhere, provide students and staff with access to books about homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, transsexuality, family diversity, etc.
- Make sure that works of fiction (books, films, etc.) reflect sexual and gender diversity.
- Make sure that documents about LGBT topics are findable using the library catalogue's search engine.
- Create a display about sexual and gender diversity at the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Forms

- Change forms and all other relevant documents provided by the establishment in order to make them more inclusive.
 - a. When the form includes a gender identification, offer an inclusive set of response choices. Do not require the choices to be mutually exclusive. For example, “check all that apply: male, female, transgender, other (specify).”
 - b. When the form refers to the parents, replace “father” and “mother” by “parent 1” and “parent 2.”

Residences and access to infrastructures

In general

- Ensure that the premises are safe, accessible and available.
- When spaces or activities are divided by gender, allow young trans people to choose based on the gender of their choice.

Bathrooms and locker rooms

- Allow trans students to use the bathrooms that match their self-identified gender.
- Set up gender-neutral bathrooms or mixed bathrooms, in order to ensure that bathrooms are available all across the school or the campus. Identify these spaces with a clear sign. Include gender-neutral bathrooms in all new building plans.
- Set up individual (private) locker-room spaces and showers in sports centres.

Assigning residences and roommates

- Allow trans residents to be housed based on their self-identified gender.
- Create mixed-gender residences where students who wish it can be paired up without regard for their gender.
- Help LGBT students to find roommates that respect and support them.
- Help LGBT students to change roommates should they find themselves in a hostile situation.


Climate

- Ensure that residence and sports centre staff demonstrate a welcoming, positive and helpful attitude toward LGBT people.
- Ensure that staff confront homophobic behaviours and help LGBT students to meet one another.
- Ensure that residence staff take training that deals with, among other things, sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as issues of consent in sexual relations, harassment and sexual assault.
- Post signs in support of LGBT people in the residences and sports centres: LGBT support networks, information, LGBT events, etc.
- Underscore the importance of building a welcoming community; involve LGBT students in the residences' and sports centres' activities.
- Establish behaviour expectations at new residents' orientation meetings. Give an introduction to LGBT issues at these meetings.
- Contemplate the possibility of having queer- and trans-friendly residences that are welcoming of sexual and gender diversity, where the people using these residences have been sensitized to this diversity.

Student life and student associations

LGBT or LGBT-supportive associations

- Support the creation of LGBT student groups, and of groups that defend the rights of and provide support to LGBT people. These groups may:
 - a. organize social activities for LGBT students;
 - b. encourage peer support and discussion among LGBT students;
 - c. break the isolation experienced by some LGBT students;
 - d. take charge of including LGBT youth that have newly arrived at the school;
 - e. put into place a mentorship system among LGBT students from different grade levels;
 - f. offer support and information regarding questions that concern LGBT young people, such as coming out;
 - g. launch anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia campaigns. Collaborate with activities held for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia;
 - h. offer training workshops at the school and raise awareness about issues that affect sexual minorities;
 - i. discuss anti-homophobia efforts with the people in charge of such projects, and advise the college or the university on the needs of sexual and gender minorities;
 - j. encourage the circulation of information concerning LGBT issues in the institution.



CEGEP de Lévis-Lauzon created an institutional committee on sexual diversity made up of professionals, support staff, professors, management and students. Everyone is freed from their duties once a month to attend a meeting. This is in addition to the student sexual diversity group.

- Support the longevity of these groups. The following factors help:
 - a. quick and easy access to a space;
 - b. a direct telephone line;
 - c. financial support from the institution or student association;
 - d. the support of a staff member;
 - e. inclusion of a permanent member to ensure transition from one year to the next;
 - f. student leadership;
 - g. support from external organizations;
 - h. the possibility of hiring a paid employee;
 - i. the institution's awareness that the group's longevity is important.

Extracurricular and sports activities

- Make sure there are no obstacles to LGBT students' participation in physical and sports activities as well as in other extracurricular activities.
- Allow trans people to join sports teams based on their self-identified gender, without having to come out as trans if they don't want to.
- For trans people, give them access to the locker room of their choice or to an individual locker room.

International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia takes place each year on May 17. This date is not very convenient for colleges and universities. This is why a number of colleges in Québec have taken the initiative to move the day to April 17 so that students will be available for the activities they program. In universities, the activities most often take place in March or April. As well, some schools offer not only a day, but a full week of activities, which creates greater flexibility for student participation regardless of their schedules.

Here are some ideas for activities to hold during this special day or week, or at any other time:

- Screen feature films and documentaries on LGBT issues, followed by a discussion;
- Host play performances that deal with LGBT issues;
- Hold a workshop on a chosen topic;
- Sell t-shirts (or hand out cards) that represent all the possible types of romantic relationship dyads or friendships (a woman and a man, two men, two women, etc.; include both trans and cis people in each type of example);
- Hold a gay pride flag-raising. The flag can be signed by students and staff members, which adds a personal touch;
- Give out rainbow pins or bracelets (purchased or handmade);
- Host a lecture on the topic. It can be useful to make attendance mandatory in connection with a teaching activity, to ensure that there is at least a minimum number of attendees;
- Put together an information table, for instance on same-sex parenting;
- Hold awareness-raising activities with international students who are newly arrived in Québec;
- Create a display case in the library;
- Present an exhibition on sexual and gender diversity;
- Take the opportunity to administer an anonymous survey of students and staff about homophobic behaviours and attitudes;
- Organize fun activities, for instance a swearing-in in the school's public space; the host, dressed up like a judge, can make people promise that they won't exhibit homophobic behaviours or say homophobic things;
- Create handmade posters that present current students with the words "Would we still be friends if I were transgender (or a lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc.)?" at the top of the posters. Using pictures of actual students boosts the impact of this project.

Hold a gay pride flag-raising – The flag was first signed by students and staff members from the school (CEGEP Lévis-Lauzon).



Prevention and training

Prevention

- Survey the student population or carry out internal investigations with students and staff to understand LGBT students' needs and barriers to integration, and put into place appropriate measures.
- Develop a strategic plan that includes precise actions and targets, in the aim of improving the climate in the school's various spaces and services (public spaces, sports, student services, etc.).
- Create safe spaces and support the creation of groups (ex.: a student sexual diversity association) where LGBT students can feel safe. These associations may be exclusively for LGBT students or may also include allies.

- Develop an allyship program. Provide ally training, which should include the following topics, among others: stereotypes; the institutional policies; provincial and federal laws and other relevant legal considerations; suggested strategies for responding to instances of hostility or discrimination; tips on how to guide students toward appropriate resources.
 - a. Give these trainings annually if possible;
 - b. After the training, give out an allyship symbol so that the people can show that they are trained allies.

Training


- Learn about staff members' training needs. The following training needs are often reported:
 - a. trans people;
 - b. LGBT-phobias in sports;
 - c. concrete intervention approaches for situations of homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia or transphobia;
 - d. understanding the ways in which heterosexism is still very present in educational settings;
 - e. staff training for clinics or medical services on how to be welcoming of sexual and gender diversity.
- Offer a range of training options: workshops, courses, lectures, first-person narratives on sexual and gender diversity and more. Trainings, particularly those on trans issues, can be provided by community organizations.
- Ensure that the staff who are most directly involved with LGBT students have access to trainings on the subject. As much as possible, aim to train all staff at the school (student services, libraries, residences, etc.).
- Offer participants cards and pins to help them demonstrate their openness and identify the spaces they use in the school as being welcoming spaces.
- Invite staff to continue to take training on the topic of trans issues and the diversity of sexual orientations, for instance by reading and attending conferences.
- Distribute studies and publications on LGBT issues to the school's staff and make them accessible on the school's website.

Why do we need training?

- *To self-evaluate our own practices.*
- *To stay abreast of advances made in Québec.*
- *To learn about more resources.*
- *To rethink things and improve them within our own establishment, for example by inviting the student sexual diversity group to take part in open house activities.*

“There is no task more important than building a world in which all of our children can grow up to realize their full potential, in health, peace and dignity.”

- Kofi Annan



Appendix 1

Training activities available

Institut national de santé publique

For a New Understanding of Homosexuality.

Length: 1 day

Adapting Our Interventions to Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People (Prerequisite: For a New Understanding of Homosexuality).

Length: 1 day

Goal: Take action regarding the vulnerability factors for gay and bisexual people; improve the accessibility and quality of services provided.

Clientele: Workers, teachers and management staff in the health network, the education network and community organizations

<http://www.inspq.qc.ca/formations/itss/nouvelle-vision-homosexualite-respect-des-orientations-sexuelles>

Note: This training is paid.

GRIS – Personal stories from LGB people

Goal: Demystify sexual diversity through volunteers' real personal stories.

Clientele: Students of all levels, teaching bodies and other staff.

Montréal: www.gris.ca, 514-590-0016

Québec City: <http://www.grisquebec.org>, 418-523-5572

Mauricie, Centre-du-Québec: <http://www.grismcdq.org>, 819-445-0007

Chaudière-Appalaches: <http://www.grischap.qc.ca>, 581-225-8440

Estrie: <http://grisestrie.org>, 819-823-6704

Gris-Montréal in Gaspésie: 418-368-1266

LGBT Family Coalition

Trainings on sexual and gender diversity to help people learn more, equip themselves and take action.

Length: 2 to 3 hours (variable based on needs)

Goal: To better understand the issues related to sexual and gender diversity; to identify means to support the work of school staff or people working with youth; to target courses of action to make educational and youth settings more inclusive.

Note: The training can be adapted to specific needs, such as basic definitions relevant to sexual and gender diversity; young people with LGBT parents; challenges and roadblocks faced in real time when working to support LGBT youth; prevention and intervention to stop bullying and harassment related to sexual diversity.

Clientele: Staff and future staff in school and youth settings

<http://www.familleslgbt.org/training.php?lang=en>

Institute for Sexual Minority Health (ISMH)

The ISMH offers several training sessions of various lengths, including:

Creating Safe Spaces: Affirming Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth and Adults

Length: variable

Goal: To provide participants with the tools they need to identify the factors that help create safe and welcoming environments for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) individuals, couples and families in schools, health and social service agencies, community organizations, and other relevant settings.

Shifting Paradigms: A Primer for Working with Transgender Individuals

Length: variable

Goal: Help anyone working in the schools or health and mental health fields to better understand the issues and challenges experienced by transgender and transsexual individuals, and to develop approaches that are tailored to their needs.

Trainers: Bill Ryan and Françoise Susset

The ISMH also provides other trainings, as well as consultation and clinical supervision services.

Clientele: Workers, teachers and management staff in the health network, the education network and community organizations.

<http://ismh-isms.com/>

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)

Addressing Homophobia in Sport: Leading the Way for your Organization

Length: 2 hours (information session) or 3 hours 30 minutes (interactive workshop)

Goal: To provide coaches and other sport leaders with the opportunity to really understand what homophobia is, and how it can hurt your organization's athletes, coaches, officials and other participants, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Note: CAAWS also offers an information session for sports organizations' managers or boards of directors.

Clientele: Coaches and managers working in sports.

http://www.caaws-homophobiainsport.ca/e/book_a_workshop/index.cfm


Do you want to offer training? You can also contact an LGBT organization in your area. To find local resources, consult:

Guide de ressources LGBT, Gai écoute (in French only)

<http://guidelgbt.org>

Open? Are You... Really?

<http://reallyopen.com>



Appendix 2

Guides and other resources

General

Guide de ressources LGBT, Gai écoute (in French only)

<http://guideigbt.org>

This site provides a wide range of diverse resources for LGBT people, grouped by categories such as seniors, youth, trans people, LGBT parents and more.

Open? Are You... Really? (in French and English)

<http://reallyopen.com>

This site is split into three parts:

- a questionnaire to learn where you are in relation to your openness to sexual diversity;
- information toward a general understanding of what homophobia is;
- a list of diverse resources for LGBT people.

A comme allié.e.s (in French only)

<http://acommeallies.ca>

This site provides a wide range of tools and resources toward the inclusion of sexual and gender diversity.

Portal on Bullying, Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés

https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/bullying/Pages/index_en.aspx

This site provides information about bullying; about what to do if you are a victim or witness of bullying, or if you yourself are a bully; and about how to handle things if you are a loved one or a worker that deals with one of these three types of people. The site also lists useful resources.

LGBT Parenting

LGBT Family Coalition (in French and English)

<http://www.familleslgbt.org/main.php?lang=en>

This site is aimed at LGBT families of all kinds. It offers:

- a range of workshops and activities;
- tools and trainings;
- appropriate resources;
- up-to-date information on LGBT parenting.

Sports activities

Guide juridique sur la prévention et la lutte contre les incivilités, les violences et les discriminations dans le sport (in French only)

This guide on preventing discourtesy, violence and discrimination in sport is an awareness-raising and information tool intended for everyone working in sports (including athletes, referees, supporters, leaders and victims of violence).

<http://www.fsgl.org/sinformer/guide-des-incivilites-dans-le-sport/>

Leading the Way: Working with LGBT Athletes and Coaches

This guide provides information for helping coaches understand LGBT-phobias and their negative repercussions on the entire sports community. It suggests good practices for creating a sports milieu that's danger-free and respectful of everyone.

http://www.caaws-homophobiainsport.ca/e/resources_caaws/documents/CAAWS_LeadingtheWay.pdf

Griffin, P. and Carroll, H. (2010). *On the Team: Equal Opportunity for Transgender Student Athletes*.

Excellent starting point for creating an inclusive policy and procedures that apply to sports activities: recommendations, best practices and other resources.

http://media.wix.com/ugd/2bc3fc_250d5c5fe7222e08ca5feee85bae0750.pdf

NCAA Office of Inclusion (2011). *NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes Handbook*.

Precise recommendations for applying the transgender athlete inclusion policy at sporting competitions within the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

http://media.wix.com/ugd/2bc3fc_44693cb5d779311cab005d959e9486d.pdf

Trans Inclusion Policy Manual for Women's Organizations

To help trans people gain access to services understood as mostly for women (women's centres, transition homes, etc.)

<http://www.transalliancesociety.org/education/documents/02womenpolicy.pdf>

Note: The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) website also offers a series of resources (reports, guides, webinars and website links) to address the question of homophobia in sport. (In French and English.)

http://www.caaws-homophobiainsport.ca/e/about_homophobia.cfm

Work environment

Note: While they are designed for the workplace, these guides can provide information and courses of action to create inclusive and welcoming environments for LGBT young people and adults who are studying and working in colleges and universities.

Guide sur les droits des personnes face à l'homophobie de travail

Guide designed by the Commission des normes du travail and the Ministère du Travail du Québec. 2014. (In French only.)

https://www.travail.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/Documents/homophobie/Guide_homophobie.pdf

Sexual Diversity: Making Your Organization More Inclusive

This guide offers suggestions and resources for social and community services workers working in Québec.

http://acsmmontreal.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Brochure_ang_LGBT24.pdf

No More, No Less: The Same as Everyone Else! Facilitation Document on Homophobia

Facilitation document created by the CSN to help deconstruct prejudices and fight homophobia and transphobia. 2013. (In French and English.)

http://www.csn.qc.ca/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=dc0c4730-e82c-4453-a58d-834b6103a1fe&groupId=13943

Guide sur les droits des gais et lesbiennes

The FTQ's awareness-raising guide on the rights of gays and lesbians. (In French only.)

<http://ftq.qc.ca/guide-sur-les-droits-des-gais-et-lesbiennes/>

Workers in Transition: A Practical Guide About Gender Transition for Union Representatives

Guide created by the Canadian Labour Congress to facilitate the integration of trans workers into the workplace and to help union representatives to defend their rights. 2010. (In French and English.)

[http://www.cdnaids.ca/files.nsf/pages/workers-in-transition/\\$file/Workers%20in%20Transition.pdf](http://www.cdnaids.ca/files.nsf/pages/workers-in-transition/$file/Workers%20in%20Transition.pdf)

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