LGBTQ OutLoud

Resource Guide for System Leaders

About this resource guide

This resource guide was developed to support the use of the training DVD entitled LGBTQ OutLoud, developed by the Waterloo Region District School Board in partnership with OK2BME, around lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) issues. Facilitation questions and exercises are provided for each of the main chapters in the DVD that can be used to inspire and guide discussion with administrators, and management staff.

Using this DVD with your staff

* View the video prior to showing it to staff.
* Review the resource guide and choose which facilitation questions or exercises you will use with your staff.
* Encourage *active listening*. Because the content of this video is likely to elicit emotional responses from the staff, it is important that the staff engage with each other in ways that ensure everybody has the opportunity both to speak and to be listened to. It is advised that you set guidelines or norms to ways to "actively listen" in advance of any discussions.
* Discuss how this DVD supports the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Goal of Optimizing Learning and Achievement of <u>ALL</u> Students
* Discuss how this DVD can be used at staff meetings and in schools and why it is important.
* Encourage staff to start having these courageous conversations.

Overview

LGBTQ OutLoud is both informational and inspirational – a powerful teaching tool that can be used to support the WRDSB's overall goal of optimizing learning and achievement of <u>all</u> students by contributing to the collective effort of developing inclusive learning environments. At the WRDSB, we believe that all students can achieve high standards and that all staff can teach and support students to a high standard; however, we also understand that if staff and students do not feel safe, valued and welcome, they will not be able to achieve to their highest potential.

We acknowledge that there are staff and students in our Board who have not felt cared for and connected because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This resource seeks to raise awareness around homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, demonstrate how to provide a safe environment and why it is important, and to support students, staff, parents, and community members who identify as being a member of the LGBTQ community. It is hoped that the DVD, with support of this resource guide, will result in greater understanding, awareness and mutual respect for all of our differences, so that people can feel safe to identify however they want without fear of bullying or hatred. When we foster respect and kindness, we encourage safe and healthy environments that are foundational to the learning agenda.

What the Research Tells Us…

From "Shaping a Culture of Respect in our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships", a Safe Schools Action Team report on gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour in schools (December 2008) , we learn that homophobia can have a negative impact on school safety, school climate, and student learning.

In May 2008, Egale Canada conducted the first national survey on homophobia in Canadian schools. These are some of the results:

School Incidents	% LGBTQ	% Straight
Students who felt unsafe at school.	Over 66%	20%
Have been sexually harassed	41%	19%
Agreed with the statement "It is hard form me to feel accepted at my school"	47.5%	19%
Feel that at least one area of the school would be unsafe for LGBTQ people	70%	49%
Thought teachers addressed homophobia effectively	33%	60%

Other results showed us that 36% of LGBTQ students heard homophobic comments from teachers or staff, and that 40% of LGBTQ students would attempt suicide.

Every student and staff person is entitled to a safe and caring learning environment, and to learn and work in an environment free from harassment and violence. Clearly, this is not the reality for many of our LGBTQ students. We must acknowledge these disturbing statistics and work together in moving forward to transform our schools and places of work into safe, inclusive, and more welcoming environments.

Questions for Facilitating Discussion

LGBTQ OutLoud Introduction
1. Superintendents, Administrators and Board staff have participated in this video. What kind of message do you think that sends out to the viewers?
2. Discuss the significance of the title of this resource: "LGBTQ OutLoud".
3. How aware are you of LGBTQ issues on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is low and 10 is high? Explain your response. You may wish to revisit this question after viewing the clip.

Common Terms
1. How does having an understanding of common terms encourage acceptance?

Homophobia
1. Explain the difference between homophobia and heterosexism.
2. What connections do you see between homophobia and other "isms" and ways that we discriminate (eg. race, religion, ability, class, etc.)?

Myths
1. Discuss the impact that myths about the LGBTQ community have on your school and/or workplace environment.

LGBTQ Experiences
1. Think about a time when you or someone you know has been discriminated, excluded, or devalued as a person. How did this affect the school and/or workplace environment? Discuss the impact of discrimination, exclusion and being devalued for a person who identifies as LGBTQ.

Trans Experiences
1. a) Make a list of all the times a person who identifies as trans would be placed in a difficult situation. Facilitator prompt: going to the bathroom, checking off if you are male or female on a form, shopping

for clothes, wearing a bathing suit, playing sports, etc..
b) What impact would this have on their life?
c) What can you do to support a person who identifies as trans in your school or workplace?

Two-Spirited

Info: *"Two-Spirited" is a term imposed on the Aboriginal community by the dominant culture in recent years. The concept has existed for a long time. It is a person who has the spirit of male and the spirit of female. They have the ability to see things from both perspectives. Historically, two-spirited people were revered in their communities as spiritual leaders and chiefs and clan mothers would go to them for guidance.*

1. Why do you think that this perception of two-spirited people has changed?
2. Do you think two-spirited can be accepted and revered in their communities as they once were? Why or why not?

LGBTQ Families

1. What kinds of practices have we been doing in our schools and workplaces that are not inclusive of different kinds of families?
2. What can we do within our school and workplace community to make it more welcome and inclusive to different kinds of families?

Coming Out

1. How would you support a colleague or staff member who has come out to you?
2. Coming out can be a life long process for people who identify as LGBTQ.
a) What are some assumptions we make about people?
b) What could you do differently to be more inclusive of people?

That's So Gay

1. What is the impact of hearing that phrase for you? for staff who identify as LGBTQ? for the school and workplace environment?
2. What would you want a staff member to do if they hear a homophobic comment made by another staff member at school and/or in the workplace? Discuss how you would communicate this to your staff.

Allies

1. What is the role of an ally and why are allies important to people who identify as LGBTQ?
2. Some people suggest that misconceptions about LGBTQ people will not change without gay/straight alliances – just as racism cannot be overcome without inter-racial groups coming together to confront race issues. Do you agree with this? If you agree with it, how would you support your point of view? If you disagree, how would you support your argument?

Safe Spaces

1. a) What are the qualities of a safe space?
   b) Who benefits from a safe space?
2. What can schools and workplaces do to be a safe space?

Be the Change

1. In this chapter, people interviewed in the DVD were asked to express in less than 10 words an action item or message that they wanted to share with viewers. What would be your action item? the action item for your school or department?