

## Homosexuality is Not an Illness

### Scientists all agree

Homosexuality means romantic, emotional, and sexual relations between members of the same sex: between two men or between two women.

Homosexuality was long considered an illness. As of May 17, 1990, homosexuality has been removed from the World Health Organization's (WHO) list of mental illnesses.

Homosexuality is not a perversion, some kind of sexual deviation or unnatural behaviour. What's more, it has nothing to do with pedophilia.

## Sexual Orientation is Not a Choice

### No one's ever chosen it

Whether you're a man or a woman, heterosexual or homosexual, sexual orientation is not a choice. If that such a choice were possible, few people would be expected to choose the hard road in society in order to find love.

## Sexual Diversity

### A matter of respect

Sexual attraction is not the same for everyone. The majority of men are emotionally and sexually attracted toward women. Likewise, the majority of women are emotionally and sexually attracted to men.

However, this is not what nature intended for all men and for all women. So, some men are romantically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to men whereas some women are attracted to other women in the same ways. These people are gay men and lesbians. As well, other people are bisexual because they are attracted to both men and women.

For some people, their male or female gender identity does not match their biological sex. These people are transgender.

## A Shock to Parents

### Love wins out

When their child is born, parents are unable to imagine that he or she will be gay or lesbian. What's more, they have already made plans for their child's future. Then one day they find out that their child is different from their expectations.

Disaster, shame, and family disgrace: this kind of reaction is understandable. Few parents are prepared to hear that their child is gay or lesbian. Nonetheless, parents' love for their child eventually wins out over prejudice against homosexuality.



## Family Honour

### Cultural chaos

Family honour is a universal value. For some families, disclosing a family member's homosexual orientation is experienced as a disgrace that soils the family's reputation and contradicts its culture.

Our society, though, has re-evaluated how it understands homosexuality. Many families now accept that one of their members is gay or lesbian, without challenging their family values.



## There are homosexual women also

### They have rights

There have always been women who have romantic feelings and are emotionally and sexually attracted to other women.

## Homosexuality in the World

### An evolving status

It is generally assumed that one out of ten people is gay or lesbian, which should basically be the case in all countries and all cultures.

The United Nations Organization (UN) has 192 member countries. The political systems vary greatly from one country to the next. Although countries like ours prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, others ban any expression of homosexuality.

In the world, countries and governments grant rights to gay men and lesbians. They abolish criminal punishment that targets them, prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and recognise rights for same-sex couples.

### LGBTI Rights in the World<sup>1</sup>

Type of Legislation	Number of countries	Number of entities <sup>2</sup>
Anti-discrimination laws	50	33
Recognition & registration for same-sex unions <sup>3</sup>	19	14
Imprisonment	76	6
Death Penalty	7	
No legislation	Note <sup>4</sup>	Note <sup>4</sup>

1 - Source: ILGA

2 - Political bodies: State, province, territory, etc.

3 - Currently, six countries grant same-sex couples the right to marry.

4 - In several countries, particularly in the former Soviet Union and many Latin American countries, there is no legislation regarding homosexuality.

## Homophobia

### A form of discrimination

Similar to racism, xenophobia or anti-semitism, homophobia is also a form of discrimination.

Homophobia is a negative attitude or feeling, an aversion toward gay men and lesbians or toward homosexuality in general.

Homophobia surfaces as hatred, disparagement, hostility, and rejection of people considered to be gay or lesbian and of things associated with them, especially against people whose appearance and behaviour do not fit male or female gender stereotypes.

## Multiple Forms of Discrimination

### An issue for several minorities

Multiple forms of discrimination occur when bases for discrimination, such as sexual orientation, race, age, sex, ability, and so on, intersect.



## LGBT People

### Initials gaining popularity

The initials **LGBT**, which have progressively become established, stand for **L**esbians, **G**ays, **B**isexuals, and **T**ransgender.

## The Rainbow Flag

### A symbol of identity

The Rainbow Flag reflects sexual diversity. Over time it was adopted by LGBT communities in the world.



# HOMO SEXUALITY KNOWS NO BORDERS

**May 17**  
**International Day  
Against Homophobia**

A day-by-day campaign



[www.homophobiaday.org](http://www.homophobiaday.org)

## Homosexuality Knows No Borders

### It exists in every country

Held on May 17 each year, the *International Day Against Homophobia* is the moment to remember that homosexuality is a universal fact and cannot be restricted by borders.

There are gay men and lesbians in all countries. What actually differs from country to country is how these people are treated.

Not all of the world's citizens are able to enjoy the privilege of living in an egalitarian society. In many countries, loving a member of the same sex and having sexual relations with that person are against the law.

Meanwhile, in many countries like ours, sexual orientation is recognised as being a basic freedom just as is the right to freedom of religion and belief.

We must realize that homosexuality can and does make some people feel uncomfortable, particularly people who have been taught that homosexuality is abnormal, against nature, and contrary to some religious values.

### An Awareness Campaign

The current campaign, *Homosexuality Knows No Borders*, is aimed at making the general public, particularly ethno-cultural communities of all backgrounds, more aware of gay and lesbian issues, and sexual diversity.



**International Day Against Homophobia**

Message from Yolande James, Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities, and Kathleen Weil, Minister of Justice

Québec society must be exempt from prejudice and willing to make room for every individual, regardless of his or her sexual orientation.

The theme for this year's campaign, **Homosexuality Knows No Borders**, reminds us that everyone—including lesbians, gays and other sexual minority groups from the cultural communities—has a contribution to make in building Québec.

This is why, on behalf of the Québec government, we fully support International Day Against Homophobia.

*Yolande James Kathleen Weil*

Québec

## Equal Rights for Everyone

### Gay men and lesbians included

The United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

In Canada, these principles are encompassed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and by the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. This is also the case in the other Canadian provinces as well as in other countries.

Concretely, this means that the men and women living in our country all have the same rights, regardless of their race, their nationality or ethnic background, the colour of their skin, their religion or their **sexual orientation**.

## The Law Must Prevail

### The Law is the same for everyone

Our society is civil and secular—a society in which there is separation of Church and State. No one is allowed to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, for religious beliefs or any other reasons.

## Welcoming Difference

### Everyone benefits

Gay men and lesbians are proud to belong to a society that recognises their diversity just as other minority groups are.

Each year thousands of newcomers from all over the world arrive and enrich our society thanks to their knowledge and values. Many of these people have chosen our country for its open attitude toward diversity, including homosexuality.

The International Day Against Homophobia has been made possible thanks to our partners



## Resources

### Documents

MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION ET DES COMMUNAUTÉS CULTURELLES (MICC) - French Réalités juridiques et sociales de l'homosexualité et de la transsexualité dans les principaux pays d'origine des nouveaux arrivants au Québec [micc.gouv.qc.ca/publications](http://micc.gouv.qc.ca/publications)

GAY CIVIL RIGHTS [gaycivilrights.org](http://gaycivilrights.org)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH LGBT RIGHTS [hrw.org/en/category/topic/lgbt-rights](http://hrw.org/en/category/topic/lgbt-rights)

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD OF CANADA [irb-cisr.gc.ca](http://irb-cisr.gc.ca)

SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY: VULNERABILITY RESILIENCE [svr.uqam.ca](http://svr.uqam.ca)

### Community Resources

AL-FATIHA FOUNDATION [al-fatiha.org](http://al-fatiha.org)

ARCPÉI, Charlottetown [arcppei.com](http://arcppei.com)

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER QUEER WOMEN & TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY [apiqwtc.org](http://apiqwtc.org)

AVENUE COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY, Saskatoon [avenuecommunitycentre.ca](http://avenuecommunitycentre.ca)

GA'AVA [gaava.org](http://gaava.org)

GAY AND LESBIAN ARABIC SOCIETY (GLAS) [glas.org](http://glas.org)

GAY PERSONS OF COLOR [gay-persons-of-color.blogspot.com](http://gay-persons-of-color.blogspot.com)

GAYCANADA [gaycanada.com](http://gaycanada.com)

GLAD TORONTO [gladtoronto.com](http://gladtoronto.com)

HELEM [helem.net](http://helem.net)

JQ INTERNATIONAL [jqish.org](http://jqish.org)

LONG YANG CLUB INTERNATIONAL [longyangclub.org](http://longyangclub.org)

MULTIMUNDO COALITION [ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/Coalition-MultiMundo](http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/Coalition-MultiMundo)

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON [pridecentreofedmonton.org](http://pridecentreofedmonton.org)

SALAAM CANADA: QUEER MUSLIM COMMUNITY [salaamcanada.com](http://salaamcanada.com)

ULOAH UNITED LESBIANS OF AFRICAN HERITAGE [uloah.com](http://uloah.com)

WORLD CONGRESS OF GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER JEWS: KSHET [glbtjews.org](http://glbtjews.org)

YOUTH PROJECT, Halifax [youthproject.ns.ca](http://youthproject.ns.ca)

### Other Resources

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LGBT NETWORK [ai-lgbt.org](http://ai-lgbt.org)

CAEO QUÉBEC - GAY LINE [caeoquebec.org](http://caeoquebec.org)

CENTER FOR RESEARCH-ACTION ON RACE RELATIONS (CRARR), Montréal [crarr.org](http://crarr.org)

EGALE CANADA [egale.ca](http://egale.ca)

INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (IGLHRC) [iglhrc.org](http://iglhrc.org)

INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION (ILGA) [ilga.org](http://ilga.org)

LESBIAN AND GAY IMMIGRATION TASKFORCE (LEGIT) [legit.ca](http://legit.ca)

LESBIAN GAY BI TRANS YOUTH LINE [youthline.ca](http://youthline.ca)

PFLAG CANADA, Moncton [pflagcanada.ca](http://pflagcanada.ca)

THE 519 CHURCH, Toronto [the519.org](http://the519.org)

THE CENTRE, Vancouver [lgbtcentrevancouver.com](http://lgbtcentrevancouver.com)

## International Day Against Homophobia – May 17

### A day-by-day campaign

This annual event, proposed by Fondation Émergence, is a growing demonstration of solidarity. It is a privileged moment for inviting all and everyone to join forces to overcome prejudice against gay men and lesbians.

## Take Part in the Campaign

### You, too, are involved!

The fight against homophobia requires members from all communities to get involved. A few ways to participate are by hanging posters and distributing campaign pamphlets, posting the campaign's Internet banner, circulating emails, having your municipal board pass a resolution of support for the *International Day Against Homophobia*, organising activities, colloquia and conferences, reporting homophobic acts, and requesting the media to participate.

## Fondation Émergence

### We fight prejudice

Fondation Émergence's mission is to foster the personal development of gay men, lesbians, and people of other sexual diversity; and to further their inclusion within society by guaranteeing their legal and social equality.

### Fondation Émergence

P.O. Box 1006, Station C, Montréal, QC H2L 4V2  
Phone: 514-866-6788 / Fax: 514-866-8157  
Email: [courrier@fondationemergence.org](mailto:courrier@fondationemergence.org)  
Website: [www.fondationemergence.org](http://www.fondationemergence.org)

### International Day Against Homophobia

A Fondation Émergence initiative  
Email: [mail@homophobiaday.org](mailto:mail@homophobiaday.org)  
Website: [www.homophobiaday.org](http://www.homophobiaday.org)



We fight against prejudice



MAY 17, A DAY-BY-DAY CAMPAIGN

Donations by cheque made out to the Fondation Émergence inc.  
Donations by credit card (Visa or MasterCard): 514-866-6788

Fondation Émergence is a charitable organisation and is authorised to issue official receipts for income tax purposes.  
Registration No.: 875907420RR001